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**PRO PATRIA: LIMITS TO MILITARY OBEDIENCE AND
SOLDIERLY HONOR IN MODERN CONTINENTAL
EUROPE: CASE STUDIES FROM POLISH AND GERMAN
MILITARY HISTORY**

by

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March 2007

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**PRO PATRIA: LIMITS TO MILITARY OBEDIENCE AND SOLDIERLY
HONOR IN MODERN CONTINENTAL EUROPE: CASE STUDIES FROM
POLISH AND GERMAN MILITARY HISTORY**

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ABSTRACT

The present study analyzes cases when, officers considered themselves relieved of their duty as soldiers in favor of adhering either to what they believed was a higher loyalty and professional purposes or to their own personal interpretation of such values as honor, obedience, responsibility, discipline, integrity, and political neutrality.

What are the limits of obedience for a military officer? The soldiers of Poland and Germany have served their nation and various regimes in modern history. The changes in those regimes have not been without effect on the professional self-images of those professional officers. How can the ideals of national loyalty and loyalty to individual conscience in the face of an unjust regime be reconciled with the dictates of democratic civil military relations and with the need to anchor the soldier in a constitutional system? Can one, at the same time, from a different political perspective, be both a hero and a traitor? What are the similarities and differences between the moral aspects of being an officer along with an officer's professionalism in the more narrow perspective of early and mid-20th century?

The present study treats the matter of soldierly loyalty, military command and obedience and the transition from totalitarian to democratic rule in central Europe in the 20th century as such affects especially soldiers in the state.

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I am dedicating this thesis to Paula, my beloved daughter.

Robert Tkaczyk

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I. INTRODUCTION

The present study treats the matter of soldierly loyalty, military command and obedience and the transition from totalitarian to democratic rule in central Europe in the 20th century as such affects especially soldiers in the state. Throughout modern European history, national armies have typically been established by kings, princes, and parliaments. In this connection, military honor and professional loyalty have therefore been the foremost qualities required of a military officer first to the dynasty and later to the nation state. Such loyalty is supposed to be unconditional so long as such loyalty is based upon the rule of law. It is one of the fundamental functions of an armed force that its soldiers be loyal to their nation, their commanders, and their comrades in arms. One of the functions of patriotism and nationalism at arms has been to demonstrate, often through elaborate ceremony, the close connection of military officers' professional honor with citizenship and deference to the nation-state. However, historically, such loyalty has not always proven to be unconditional, especially in the era of the great wars of nations, such as the two World Wars and the Cold War. But characterizing loyalty as "equivocal" would be a contradiction in terms. Nonetheless, a study of the soldier and the state in central Europe reveals notable instances when a nation's concepts of loyalty, honor, and discipline were misinterpreted or violated by an unscrupulous regime or individual. In certain instances, officers considered themselves relieved of their duty as soldiers in favor of adhering either to what they believed was a higher loyalty and professional purposes or to their own personal interpretation of such values as honor, obedience, responsibility, discipline, integrity, and political neutrality.¹

The present study analyzes such cases, making use, thereby, of the record of the past from the early 19th century until the 1990s. Among such soldiers, there were certain Prussian officers who were dissatisfied with the

¹ Hans Ernest Fried, *The Guilt of the German Army* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1942), 235–38.

Franco-Prussian treaty and upon the outbreak of the Russian war in 1812, joined the service of their country's nominal enemy, Russia. Carl von Clausewitz, whose book, *On War*, became the masterpiece which influenced generations of soldiers, statesmen, and scholars, changed sides after Napoleon's retreat from Moscow.² "Three hundred Prussian officers – almost a fourth of the officer corps – submitted their resignations in disgust; and among those who now left the king's service were numbered Boyen and Clausewitz."³ From the 17th century onward, the dynastic soldierly principles of the Prussian Army had been based on a concept of strict patriotic fervor to the sovereign and court, a fervor that recognized devotion only to the greater glory of Prussia and the army itself and a loyalty that transcended all other oaths of allegiance to the king and estate. Thus Clausewitz's statement after the Franco-Prussian treaty is remarkable: "I believe, I must confess, that the shameful blot of a cowardly capitulation is never wiped away; that this drop of poison in the blood of a people is transmitted to posterity and will cripple and undermine the energy of later generations."⁴ Clausewitz's ideal of service to Prussia and Germany at large embraced a patriotic calling for the officer beyond the dynastic bond to the sovereign, and looked forward to the soldier of the nation. In this case, to the German nation as it rose up against Napoleon in the era of the wars of liberation.

The question of obedience and its limits in the soldier's code of honor became more acute in the age of total war and the ideological conflicts that lay at the foundation of this era. Both World War II and the Cold War provide further notable examples of the limits some officers placed on unquestioning and unconditional obedience and the crises of conscience they faced in maintaining their military professionalism in the midst of. Claus von Stauffenberg and Hans

² Gordon A. Craig, *The Politics of the Prussian Army 1640-1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1955), 59.

³ *Ibid.*, 58.

⁴ Otto Hintze, *Die Hohenzollern und ihr Werk* (7. Aufl., Berlin, 1916), 467, quoted in Gordon A. Craig, *The Politics of the Prussian Army 1640-1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1955), 58.

Oster are only two of the many German officers in WW II who acted against their superior officers and national leaders in adherence to their own convictions. Finally and the case that is the center piece of this study, in the 1970s, Col. Ryszard Kuklinski, a Polish officer, demonstrated his opposition to the ruling communist regime when he delivered classified documents to the CIA.

The transition from communism to a democratic system in central and eastern Europe in the last two decades has raised issues of military professionalism amid the democratic attempt to master the totalitarian past of the soldier. And the legacy of the past cries out for analysis and policy transformations as such apply to new democracies. The changes in regime in Poland in the late 1980s and other central European countries necessitate a reorientation of the principles of exemplary soldierly honor and service on a more pluralistic foundation. As a member of an enlarged NATO, Poland must now study the examples of its neighbors and former opponents concerning such widespread issues of political purpose as ethics, soldierly honor, and the negative effects of national and world politics on military institutions.⁵ This thesis's comparison of various national case studies may provide soldiers with the means better to understand their political and social worlds, and to orient themselves within an open debate about the past that is typical of European society at its best. In this context, for example, an officer or soldier might ask such questions of themselves, their superiors and of society as the following:

What makes one a hero or a traitor? Does the officer's profession demand more than any other profession due to patriotism? What are the main and real reasons to pardon Col Kukliński for spying, and to glorify Hitler's traitors?⁶ The argument for this study is that there are some fundamental ethical values which should not be affected by time, and also that after 1989, influential forces in

⁵ Marek A. Cichocki, *Porwanie Europy* (Krakow: Osrodek Mysli Politycznej, 2004), 31.

⁶ Radek Sikorski, "Pride of Poland," *National Review*, Vol. 56, April 19, 2004.

domestic politics established elites with strong Atlantic views, which led to critical change within the Polish strategic community and changed the image of an officer in Polish civil military relations.

The wide range of literature covering concepts of a modern military serving a democratic society does not evaluate theory in the light of real events. None of the authors provide the answer to the main question this thesis addresses.

Considering the principles of military professionalism and civil-military relations, is it ever possible to excuse disloyalty or treason?

All the officers named above, Oster, Stauffenberg, and Kuklinski, and many others violated their oath as military officers and acted against the system they had vowed to serve. It is those situations and their example that evoked this question, the question that underlies this thesis as concerns the valid heritage of such figures as a source of tradition for modern central European soldiers as well as a reflection of the limits of the obedience more generally in the shadow of totalitarianism and its memory.

Following this introduction, the thesis chapters are organized as follows. Chapter II covers the principles of military professionalism, emphasizes the supremacy of politics and policy, and illustrates how the military is used as a tool and an instrument of power and force by the government and political leaders. Chapter III focuses on the principles of democratic civil-military relations and the present difficulties involved in the civilian control of the military especially as these apply to central and eastern Europe. It discusses the standards of military professionalism for officers and the principles of civil-military relations. Chapter IV presents examples of historical cases in which military officers believed it was their professional and moral duty to act in defiance of their government's political decisions and the orders of their civilian leaders.

In the present era of democratic change, when control over the military is a fundamental aspect of civil-military relations, there should be no potential for dilemmas based on questions of obedience or a divided loyalty. Professional soldiers must have a clear understanding of their duties and responsibilities at all times and in all circumstances. Yet in the midst of the present conflict, in which the lines of soldierly calling are blurred with those of internal security as well as the requirements of irregular combat (i.e., civil military fusion) the urgency of these questions is more intense. Those duties and responsibilities are summarized in Chapter V, the thesis conclusion.

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II. PRINCIPLES OF MILITARY PROFESSIONALISM

A. THE EVOLUTION OF MILITARY PROFESSIONALISM

A military's primary goal is to serve the nation-state and its ideals and to maintain a citizen-soldier way-of-life with the highest standards. The fundamental characteristics of army professionalism are a focus on service, expert knowledge, a unique culture, and a professional military ethos amid a political world that is chaotic as well as wider society marked by constant change and upheaval. Professional soldiers are self-disciplined, fully trained, and highly motivated, ready to sacrifice their life for their homeland and the security of its citizenry and to serve a coherent political purpose of national and alliance strategy. They strive to achieve a high level of professionalism through patriotism and an institutional culture that consolidates soldiers into cohesive units with high esprit de corps. "Army professionals voluntarily limit certain privileges and rights to competently practice the art and science of warfare. Challenge and selfless service are part of the contract – a soldier serving the Nation."⁷

The concept of army professionalization from the feudal basis of arms as it existed at the end of the medieval period, that is, as it originated at the turn of the fifteenth century, caused significant changes in the composition of armies, in military techniques, and military organization with implications for the subject at hand. The basis of military service was no longer religious duty, but financial gain.⁸ For instance, the armies of the northern Italian city states employed such soldiers of fortune because of their financial power and limits of men. The early model of a professional army was not perfect, however. Most soldiers recruited were not disciplined who in their savage condition showed a natural warlike spirit. But their moral codes, traditions, discipline, and customs differed radically from

⁷ The Army Field Manual I (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, 2001), 14.

⁸ Peter Paret, *Makers of Modern Strategy from Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1986), 15.

those that the knights of feudalism had represented. Besides, as the Florentine statesman and philosopher Niccolo Machiavelli pointed out, the *condottieri* were untrustworthy, unreliable, and caused a limitation of sovereignty. In reaction to the *condottieri*, he came up with the idea of creating a conscript army: an army composed of a state's citizens who would fight willingly and enthusiastically for the state.⁹

By the 17th century the most significant characteristics of this new military were discipline – a discipline based on a hierarchical chain of command – and constant drill and training to improve the army's military skills. The army's training under Maurice of Orange, for instance, despite its inclusion of mercenaries, was based on a system of values in which the relationship between the soldiers and the state was based on obedience and loyalty.¹⁰

At the beginning of the 17th century, many European states implemented military reforms and changes championed in theory by Machivelli and put into effect by Maurice of Orange. The period was characterized by large-scale military campaigns, which led to a strengthening of the state's authority. The French army, for example, was reorganized and put under dynastic civilian control and administration. The most significant military reform of the period was the introduction of a definite military hierarchy and division of power among the ranks which created a new unity of command.¹¹ In addition, the implementation of a combat uniform and equipment standardization increased the sense of discipline and general morale.¹²

While technology had a major impact on the development of the army, other factors molded seventeenth-century warfare. The first issue to be addressed comprised the soldier training methods. New methods were needed to

⁹ Peter Paret, *Makers of Modern Strategy from Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age*, 20.

¹⁰ Hans Delbrück, *The Dawn of Modern Warfare* (London: University of Nebraska Press, 1990), 158.

¹¹ Peter Paret, *Makers of Modern Strategy from Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age*, 67.

¹² MacGregor Knox and Williamson Murray, eds., *The Dynamics of Military Revolution, 1300-2050* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 53.

enable soldiers to maintain their self-discipline and the ability to overcome tactical weaknesses on the battlefield. Altering and improving troop behavior required infantry training, an emphasis on obedience, and especially military drill, key elements in the achievement of a high level of military skills and discipline.¹³

During this period of absolutist states, the French model was one of the most popular military examples in Europe. However, by the middle of the eighteenth century, Prussia had become perhaps the outstanding military power in the region. King Frederick the Great paid great attention to the development of military professionalism, with an emphasis on obedience and faithfulness to orders. To achieve this goal, he wanted the Prussian nobility, whom he considered the mainstay of Prussian honor, to play the main role in the army as officers.¹⁴ In their efforts to achieve the highest standards of training, Frederic and his officers attached great importance to military drill on the model of the so called *Lineartaktik*, which they believed was essential to the physical and psychological control and forbearance that the battle culture demanded. Moreover, he wanted his troops to be more afraid of their officers than of the dangers they faced on the battlefield. He believed that the army reflected the dynastic state based on the estates. So, in the age of Frederic, Prussia was famous for its drills, which were executed with great precision.¹⁵

By the end of the eighteenth century, the era of the old Prussian regime began to draw to a close in the face of the rise of new social groups and the impact of the revolution on European society. The military suffered from new constraints that stemmed mainly from the lack of motivation of the individual soldier. But there were a number of other organizational deficiencies as well, such as a lack of appropriate staff and logistics support, that made the old regime warfare profoundly indecisive. In addition, the current troops were very expensive to maintain, and many in the government complained that the state's military

¹³ Knox and Murray, eds., *The Dynamics of Military Revolution, 1300-2050*, 47.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 50.

¹⁵ Paret, *Makers of Modern Strategy*, 99.

expenses exceeded the gains achieved. And the sociopolitical and economic constraints were perceived by the Western states' citizenry as aspects of the social inequality.¹⁶

In France, especially, new values and ideologies of the Enlightenment were endorsed that swept across the nation and ultimately led to the French Revolution, which had a major impact on the development of the military profession. First of all, ordinary people began to identify themselves with the state's interest in the "common good." And they began to unite against not only internal, but also external threats posed by other European states that were unfriendly to the revolutionary new ideas in Europe. Eventually, revolution and war became identified as one and the same thing. And the young *République* proved up to the challenge, achieving great military success and strengthening its position both within the European arena and internationally.

The military power of France at the beginning of the nineteenth century was almost entirely due to Napoleon Bonaparte whose genius introduced many changes in the military arts as well as in society at large. Napoleon's huge armies and highly efficient organizational system enabled campaigns to extend across huge distances and thus to conquer more and more European states. He was also able to achieve this goal because the French national army consisted of citizen soldiers who were willing to die in defense of their national values.¹⁷ Moreover, in contrast to the army of Prussia's Frederic II, Napoleon's army included a new generation of officers who did not necessarily come from the higher social stratum and whose careers had originated with the French revolution. Though they were mostly young and inexperienced, a few battles turned them into efficient, self-reliant military leaders.

As a result of the Napoleonic hegemony in Europe at the beginning of the nineteenth century, the French model of a modern national state influenced most

¹⁶ Paret, *Makers of Modern Strategy*, 156.

¹⁷ Delbrück, *Dawn of Modern Warfare*, 426.

countries to adopt new institutions and judicial standards and laws that were innovative at the time.¹⁸ Moreover, the twin ideas of “the nation” and “nationalism” arose in countries that had been defeated by the French army. This trend, especially, was evident after 1806 in German-speaking states and lands, where French hegemony was absolute. In Prussia, the ideas of a cadre of reformers gave rise to a new type of thinking officer (i.e., careers open to talent versus the ties of dynastic blood) as well as a staff system that would be capable of responding to the new challenges. The system of education for these officers involved new operational methods and tactics designed to make the Prussian army equal or superior to its enemy in movement, flexibility, inventiveness, and fighting power. The system was designed also to produce a new type of military leader who, thanks to his acquired military knowledge, would be able to work more effectively.¹⁹

These revolutionary changes were also seen in European armies that became nationalized but, unlike the French, did not depend on having superior numbers. Thus, the entire nineteenth century was characterized by the significant development, modernization, and professionalization of Europe’s armies.²⁰ The key element of these strong new armies was the new self-disciplined citizen-soldier, who was well educated and strongly committed to the idea that military service is the very essence of citizenship itself. Because of economic constraints, there was a decided preference for the quality of troops, rather a quantity of troops. In any case, in addition to the active forces, there were also several thousand soldiers in reserve who could be swiftly mobilized.²¹

In the late 1850s, when Helmut von Moltke became chief of staff of the Prussian army, the merger of professionalization on the 19th century pattern,

¹⁸ Knox and Murray, eds., *The Dynamics of Military Revolution, 1300-2050*, 71.

¹⁹ Gordon A. Craig, *The Politics of the Prussian Army 1640-1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1955), 38.

²⁰ Knox and Murray, eds., *The Dynamics of Military Revolution, 1300-2050*, 92.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 94.

mass politics, and the imperative of machine warfare in the age of classes emerged. The implications of all of this for the subject at hand are fulsome. First, the reformers argued that amateurs should no longer command on the modern battlefield. They demanded a full-time commitment from officers who, they said, should have a good command of basic military knowledge and demonstrate courage, initiative, and enthusiasm within their military service. One of Moltke's more innovative moves was to introduce the use of railroads for the large-scale transport of men and equipment.²² As a result of the application of modern technology such as the needle gun and the railroad by competent personnel and the use of new, more effective tactics, in 1871, Prussia achieved its ultimate goal: the unification of all German lands under Prussia's auspices. Its political and military successes – most notably, winning its war with France in 1870 – made the new Germany and Great Britain by the end of the nineteenth century the two most powerful states in Europe.²³

In Europe, the impact of these two national revolutions and the concept of nation-states caused enormous sociopolitical and economic changes, changes that were driven by a nationalist spirit and that affected every aspect of people's lives. The most important of these was education which was now oriented toward the restoration of national values and the cultivation of a sense of solidarity with the nation state. The widespread integration of this nationalistic education created a new generation of citizens that was focused on duty, striving, and hard work, all in the name "das Vaterland." But now this idea was conceived not in dynastic terms and that of subjects, but of citizens and nations. To them, the fatherland was not just their village or province, but the whole country; and as good citizens, their first duty was to defend their country as soldiers. Thus, to

²² Knox and Murray, eds., *The Dynamics of Military Revolution, 1300-2050*, 104.

²³ *Ibid.*, 123.

promote the principle of discipline and prepare every child to become a good soldier and good citizen, every aspect of German education was subordinated to the concept of military service.²⁴

Undoubtedly, the Great War of 1914–19 greatly reinforced this image of a modern military professionalism by its use of more and more sophisticated technology and demonstration of new strategies and tactics. The advent of the age of total war in the machine age in the dimension of social mobilization on an unprecedented scale also had troubling implications for the ideal of the professional soldier and the question of obedience and the rule of law. Notably, it was a three-dimensional conflict, in which each and every factor of the battle was crucially important. New command systems, intelligence forces, and organizational planning were introduced at both the tactical and the operational level. The introduction of tanks, planes, and submarines initiated the creation of new elite groups among the soldiers, changing the schemata of the battlefield forever and further radicalizing the face of war that had long ago left behind its dynastic framework of battle for an extreme of the *Gesamtschlacht*.²⁵

Unlike the French during World War II, the Germans had a decentralized command-and-control system that derived from the Prussian institutions of leadership in the face of war's frictional elements. This ability to learn from the past, combined with realistic experimentation, enabled the Germans to achieve many successes in that war. The level of professionalism in the German armed forces spread throughout and influence the people on an unprecedented scale. The ideology of fascism, communicated through a highly organized and dedicated National Socialist propaganda machine, strengthened the bonds between the citizenry and the state and created an unprecedented willingness to sacrifice their lives in the name of the nation-state.²⁶ However, the rise of

²⁴ Eugen Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1976), 304.

²⁵ Knox and Murray, eds., *The Dynamics of Military Revolution, 1300-2050*,.

²⁶ Peter Fritzsche, *Germans into Nazis* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2003), 161.

totalitarian ideologies out of the crucible of war also annihilated traditional ideals of soldierly obedience and made the citizen in uniform of the total imperialist nation state a major theme for the inquiry contained here.

The advent after World War II of nuclear weapons and the Cold War between Western and Eastern countries introduced a frightening new idea, the possibility of a mutually assured destruction. It was as if the genius of human invention had added the final dimension of doom to ideas born in the late 19th century that had made ideologies weapons of mass destruction even before science had perfected the fission kiloton weapon in the middle of the century. During this period, while many conflicts occurred around the world, all of them were carried out by conventional forces and at a level well under that of general war as had been the case in 1914-1945. After fifty years, the era of the Cold War ended, but very soon new challenges appeared on the horizon. Today's military professionals, both leaders and ordinary soldiers, supported by the twentieth-century's digital revolution and the strategies of network centric warfare, must be prepared to fight global terrorism. Much of the current training strategies emphasize the soldiers' development of individual combat skills and abilities through the application of the principles of leadership. In a realistic tactical environment, under mental and physical stress, they must be able to act effectively as small-unit leaders.

Throughout history, such factors as technology, changes in society, politics, and individual skills, have all played a role in an evolving revolution of the military profession. At the same time, however, some underlying values, unaffected by the passage of time were as important to medieval knights as they are to today's officers. Such values as obedience and loyalty, have survived till today and they are still the most important characteristics of the modern officer. Except for the few examples when violation of these values was excused, obedience and loyalty are the fundamentals which should be always fully respected by militaries. However, there could be situations when the violation of such principles is vital for the military success, but even then it is an exception

rather than a rule. Therefore all military personnel, especially officers due to their command function, must know that disobedience, disloyalty and treason are the worst crimes a soldier can commit. They must also know that only in an extreme, as it was in the case of anti-Nazis conspirators, treachery can be excused. Fabian von Schlabrendorff, a conspirator who was tortured by the Gestapo, said: "Obedience is the rule. However, there are cases which demand disobedience. This has been uncontested in the Prussian Army. Blind obedience has its origin with Hitler."²⁷

The works of such scholars who specialize in civil-military relations, Carl von Clausewitz, Samuel Finer, Morris Janowitz, Samuel Huntington, and more recently, Elliot Cohen, have many similar aspects but sometimes different approaches to the professional nature of the military. Nonetheless, most agree that values such as obedience, loyalty, responsibility, and discipline are the most important and necessary skills for the military professional. Without these skills an armed forces cannot simply exist.

B. THE PROFESSIONAL NATURE OF THE MILITARY

1. Expertise

According to the U.S. scholar Samuel Huntington, one of the characteristics of all specialists, including military officers, is expertise. Thus, a person who is well educated and experienced, with specialized knowledge in particular areas of his chosen field, is considered an "expert." In many fields, the standards of expertise are universal, regardless of time and location.

Military professionals, therefore, are people who specialize in the art and practice of security, defense, military affairs and conflict itself. And armed conflict, given its changing nature throughout history, has come to require new, diverse, and increasingly sophisticated skills certain of which are unique to soldiers and others of which are shared by various professions. Technological advances,

²⁷ Ulrich F. Zwargart, *How Much Obedience Does an Officer Need?* (Kansas: Combat Studies Institute, 1992), 19.

especially – nuclear weapons, aircraft, computers, etc. – require members of today's military to have extremely exacting training, selection, and education and to satisfy strict promotion procedures.²⁸ Military officers comprise a great variety of specialists equivalent to those in civilian life, such as engineers, doctors, pilots, and many others exist. But armed combat itself is a unique function of the military profession. Military officers are responsible for organizing, equipping, and training the fighting force; planning activities; and directing operations both in and out of combat.²⁹ It is their responsibility for commanding and controlling those involved in the official state application of violence as an exceptional skill, that separates military officers from other professionals. Military doctors and technicians, who are not trained to manage violence, for example, belong to the administrative branch of the officer corps, not its war-fighting branch. "A military specialist is an officer who is peculiarly expert at directing the application of violence under certain prescribed conditions."³⁰ As an officer becomes more experienced and rises in the ranks, he will be required to direct and command increasingly complex operations involving activities on a larger and larger scale. Thus, a brigade commander, for instance, is expected to function at a higher professional level than a platoon leader.

Throughout history, the management and application of organized violence has always required specialized training, specific skills, and experience. Even knights and footsoldiers in the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries and beyond were trained in the use of weapons – sword, lance, battleaxe, and eventually, guns, etc. – both on horseback and on foot. Today, that is still the case and, as in the past, in the continuing development of the art of warfare, only highly trained military personnel can rise to the level of officers. Nonetheless, during a war, less well trained civilians may replace officers for a short period of

²⁸ Thomas-Durell Young, "Military Professionalism in a Democracy," in *Who Guards the Guardians and How: Democratic Civil-military Relations*, eds., Thomas C. Bruneau and Scott D. Tollefson (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2006), 19.

²⁹ Huntington, *Soldier and the State*, 11.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 12.

time or at a low level of command. Indeed, during World War II, civilians, after only a brief training, were often promoted to officer rank and sent into combat. But they began at a relatively low level and only after gaining experience became professional officers. Thus, in a time of war, an unprofessional layman may become a professional military officer relatively quickly as compared to peacetime. Nonetheless, contemporary combat requires higher competence and technical ability from its leaders. In addition to their higher rank, competence and a gentle manner are often what makes officers not only effective leaders, but also well respected by the soldiers they command. The slogan “We salute the bars not the man” expresses well enlisted men’s attitude toward a commander who is incompetent or needlessly overbearing and brutal in his command.

2. Responsibility

The expertise of the professional military officer also entails a special social responsibility. Most professions are regulated more or less by the state, but the military profession is usually regulated in every respect by the state, whether totalitarian or democratic. An officer’s primary responsibility is to protect and defend the security of the state and its citizenry. While citizens have a vested interest in the safety of their state, only the officer corps is responsible for military security. In many countries, military behavior is regulated by precise customs, traditions, and rules which require that an officer’s skills be used only for purposes approved by his superiors and the state he serves. The officer must not employ his skills for personal benefit or personal beliefs.³¹ This obligation is the officer’s defense against any temptation to mistreat subordinates, to act against his superiors, or to betray his comrades.³² Col.Kuklinski, a Polish officer who was spying for the CIA, undoubtedly violated this important value, and did so

³¹ Huntington, *Soldier and the State*, 17.

³² Wolfgang Roysl, “Military Acting in the Spirit of Moral Obligation,” in *Civil-Military Aspects of Military Ethics: Military Leadership and Responsibility in the Postmodern Age*, eds., Edwin R. Micewski and Dietmar Pfarr (Vienna: National Defense Academy Printing Office, 2005), 70.

differently than did anti-Nazis conspirators, was acting alone and could not be sure about his decision. Moreover, he did not even try to recruit or convince other officers to join him.

An officer's obligation is to obey the legal orders of his immediate superior and win battles. He is also responsible to the ordinary citizens of his state who are likely to suffer for his failures. Since Germany between 1933-1945 was an illegal and immoral state, thereby Hitler's orders became unlawful, anti-Nazi conspirators were recognized after 1945, and excused for disobedience and treachery. Poland between 1945-1989 has never been acknowledged as an illegal state, and therefore any military disobedience against the communist system the Polish armed forces were supposed to serve must not be glorified although it has already been excused for political purposes.

The military officer is answerable downward as well, to the soldiers he commands. He is obliged to minimize the risks of his subordinates, to fight carefully and prudently, and to avoid wasting their lives by persisting in battles that cannot be won or seeking victories whose human costs outweigh their military value.³³ In addition, military commanders are accountable for any war crimes committed by their subordinates, when the crime is perpetrated as a result of the commander's order or without an order if the commander is fully aware of the crime.³⁴

3. Corporatism

Soldiers belong to a state-controlled and organized group that lives apart from the general society and they are required to be loyal to this organization. In

³³ Lloyd J. Matthews and Dale E. Brown, "The Parameters of Military Ethics," in *Two Kinds of Military Responsibility*, ed., Walzer Michael (Virginia: Pergamon-Brassey's International Defense Publishers, 1989), 67–68.

³⁴ Richard L. Lael, *The Yamashita Precedent: War Crimes and Command Responsibility* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1956), 178–79.

a democracy, this isolation may be limited but is seldom given up entirely. The process whereby the corporatism of the military is maintained consists of five important steps.

First, the requirements for entry, especially for the military elite, must be clear and commonly known. High intellectual and moral standards are essential requirements in the recruiting and selection of future soldiers, especially officers. Second, the military education system must be sufficiently wide-ranging to enable officers to develop a well-grounded, cosmopolitan understanding of the world we live in. Military education, even at the lower levels, should not be limited to military skills alone. A program that combines general education with the science of modern warfare will provide the officer corps professional status in society and contribute to his social improvement. Third, the criteria for promotion of all military personnel must be based on objective standards, clear to all, and foremost, must be unbiased and fair. Favoritism of any kind undermines the effectiveness of every army.³⁵

“Fourth is the creation, education, and training of a professional military staff. The general staff in a democracy is a public, bureaucratized profession, an essential for a modern military to perform its duties.”³⁶ Last, but surely not least, moral cohesion is vital for victory in war. “Esprit de corps,” as it is called, is a spirit of comradeship, enthusiasm, and devotion to a cause among the members of a group, usually military. It is the “feeling of camaraderie among members of a group or an organization: The campers have been together for only one week, but they are already bound by a strong esprit de corps,” which is French, meaning “group spirit.”³⁷ A profession like the military, that is often associated with the threat of danger, demands a strong sense of solidarity. A military style of life requires group cohesion and professional loyalty, and needs to maintain the

³⁵ Young, “Military Professionalism in Democracy,” 22.

³⁶ Ibid., 23.

³⁷ E.D. Hirsch Jr., Joseph F. Kett, and James Trefil, *The New Dictionary of Cultural Literacy*, 3rd edition (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2002), <http://www.bartleby.com/59/4/espritdecorp.html> (accessed September 16, 2006).

martial spirit.³⁸ Such moral cohesion is one of the most valuable elements of the group: it strengthens the cohesiveness and makes the members want the group to succeed.

The anti-Nazi conspirators were strongly tied together by “Esprit de corps,” they had mutual purpose and a great belief in the rightness of their deeds, they also supported and secured each other, and very often they died together in the name of patriotism and freedom. Col. Kukliński was the only Polish officer who cooperated with the foreign agency, recognized as an enemy that time. He was not supported by any of his friends and he did not belong to any group or organization which could be recognized today.

C. OFFICER QUALITIES AND MILITARY VALUES: MOST VITAL TRAITS

1. Code of Honor

The military code of honor is intended to define how an officer should behave in the routine and in the extreme that distinguish the life of a soldier. It is impossible of course to specify how soldiers should behave in all the possible different situations. It is especially difficult during combat because of the violence factor and the irreversible consequences involved in military action. Gentlemanly conduct, personal fealty, brotherhood, and the pursuit of glory are some of the historical and traditional components of military honor that have endured from the feudal concept of individual honor to the anchoring of same in the industrial age of national armies.³⁹

An officer, by definition, must be a gentleman or gentlewoman in his or her personal behavior. Although it is difficult to define such behavior, gentlemanly behavior, in the military sense, is based on tradition and the responsibilities of military leaders as derived from the feudal and absolutist system and adapted to the pluralistic present. It is the specific officer’s responsibility that requires him to

³⁸ Morris Janowitz, *The Professional Soldier* (New York: The Free Press, 1971), 175.

³⁹ Janowitz, *The Professional Soldier*, 218.

be a gentleman. Despite the fact that most armies today struggle with the problem of adapting the gentleman concept for a modern military, it has always been and still remains a vital component of military honor.⁴⁰

Personal allegiance, one of the elements of honor, has been adjusted to fit the military's current bureaucratic organization on the basis of the nation.. Loyalty to a person became loyalty to a formal position. Military personnel, particularly officers, are obliged to be loyal to a person, as well as to an office. Anti-Nazi conspirators and Col Kukliński were supposed to be loyal to their military commanders and civilian leaders. Nevertheless they decided to break this fundamental element of honor and act against given orders. However, as mentioned before and is discussed later, based on historical knowledge, German conspirators were acting against a recognized evil and they were not alone in their fight. Col. Kukliński was acting completely alone, he could not be sure of the rightness of his choice and his deed, although excused, is still not fully recognized.

Officers must pay personal fealty and allegiance to a civilian hierarchy. Brotherhood, or loyalty to comrades, is another indispensable aspect of military honor. It is basically a sense of loyalty to the soldiers of the unit. Because military organizations are complex, leadership requires strong group solidarity; the stronger it is, the greater the group's effectiveness. As a matter of fact, Kukliński's friends have never forgiven him that first and foremost he betrayed his comrades and brothers in arms, not a communist system. German conspirators, during the entire time of their struggle against the regime, belonged to the same group, and they remained loyal to each other until the bitter end. Brotherhood, actually, played a significant role in their way to free Germany from Hitler and his regime.

Saluting, one of the most recognizable outward signs of the military, may seem a strange element to include as an aspect of military solidarity. Civilians,

⁴⁰ Janowitz, *The Professional Soldier*, 219.

especially, may misunderstand the significance of this recognition of those of higher rank. It is both a means of identification and a welcoming sign between members of the military family.⁴¹

At first glance, the pursuit of glory seems a natural part of war. Indeed, some high-ranking generals even today claim that war is a good thing. In the past, when war seemed to be omnipresent, glory was invariably associated with the art of war as well as the imperative of feudal service or dynastic honor among one's noble peers. Today, the military's sense of honor also often involves seeking glory, but it does not necessarily have to be achieved in war.

Before 1939, German conspirators, for instance, tried to avoid war, that is why they informed Great Britain about Hitler's plans, and once the war began, they tried to bring about its end as early as possible to save many lives and make it possible for Germany to negotiate the end of the war. However, it is still not clear what Col. Kukliński could have achieved by spying for the CIA. Based on historical knowledge, it is doubtful that he could have saved Poland, which in the case of nuclear war between Russia and America would have been the centre of main nuclear impact and the U.S., thanks to Kukliński's reports, would have had precise plans of Polish defense systems and partial plans of Soviet defense systems.

Because today's military is not, strictly speaking, only a combat organization, it is also a hierarchical and bureaucratic institution with a wide range of responsibilities connected with combat as well as those of any large public enterprise. Therefore, as officers know very well, glory can be attained in many other ways than war. Undoubtedly, there is still some risk that a leader or armed group may attempt to go to war despite the costs simply for the personal or national glory of it all. But no democracy should ever promote war for the sole reason of individual or collective glory divorced from some coherent political purpose. Nonetheless, as we all know, the twenty-first century has begun with

⁴¹ Janowitz, *The Professional Soldier*, 221.

military violence that seems to have no end in sight. The pursuit of glory then, is still a strong element of military honor, that is wrongly involved in the pursuit of armed conflict.

2. Political Neutrality

“The professional soldier is above politics in domestic affairs. In totalitarian or authoritarian societies, it means that the soldier is obliged to the status quo.”⁴² In a democracy, active soldiers of any rank must avoid the trap of partisan politics while nonetheless making use of their rights as citizens. The military in a democracy, exists to protect the nation and the freedom of its people.⁴³ Collectively, it does not represent or support a particular political view or ethnic or social group. Its loyalty is to the broader ideals of the nation, to the rule of law, and to the principle of democracy itself. Military figures may, of course, participate in the political life of their country just like any other citizen, but only as individual voters. Soldiers must be retired from military service before joining a political party, so that the armed services as a whole will remain separate from politics. The military as a government institution is a neutral servant of the state and the guardian of society.⁴⁴

Especially today, in democratic Poland it is extremely important for military officers to understand the significance of political neutrality. Although Col. Kukliński did not serve in a democracy, his example can blur and complicate an understanding of this important issue. Today Polish officers must not consider that if Kukliński was allowed to act alone against the communists, so they too can also question political decisions. It is especially important now when Poland actively participates in operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.

⁴² Janowitz, *The Professional Soldier*, 233.

⁴³ Andrew Cottey, Timothy Edmunds, and Anthony Forster, *Democratic Control of the Military in Post Communistic Europe* (New York: Palgrave, 2006), 6.

⁴⁴ U.S. Department of State's Bureau of International Information Program, <http://usinfo.state.gov/principles/3civil.pdf> (accessed September 17, 2006).

3. Obedience, Loyalty, and Discipline

Since the military organization is hierarchical, officers at each level within it must be able to command unhesitatingly and have the loyalty and obedience of subordinate units. Without its hierarchical structure, military professionalism would be impossible; indeed, the military would probably not successfully continue to exist. This is why obedience, loyalty to comrades, and discipline are the highest military virtues. "When the military man receives a legal order from an authorized superior, he does not argue, he does not hesitate, he does not substitute his own views; he obeys instantly."⁴⁵ It is not only out of bounds for a soldier to have his own opinion about a specific call to action, it is unprofessional. "Only when boldness rebels against obedience, when it defiantly ignores an expressed command, must it be treated as a dangerous offense; then it must be prevented, not for its innate qualities, but because an order has been disobeyed, and in war obedience is of cardinal importance."⁴⁶ For it is the profession of the soldier to follow orders as they come through a chain of command. Regardless of what the soldier himself may feel or think is ethical or morally right, he must obey orders. This is necessary if the military system is to function properly.

Military discipline, however, is justified largely because of its combat importance. An exaggerated use of discipline in the field during combat can do more harm than good. Thus every commander should know that discipline and training during peacetime will serve efficiency in combat. Officers should be taught the necessary fundamentals so that as commanders they do not focus on the unimportant. Eventually, every military officer should become a sort of psychologist.⁴⁷ Like any other system, for the military system to operate

⁴⁵ Huntington, *Soldier and The State*, 73.

⁴⁶ Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, ed. and trans., Michael Howard and Peter Paret (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1984), 191.

⁴⁷ Janowitz, *Professional Soldier*, 43.

effectively, its various components must cooperate as expected to reach the desired outcome. If any element of the system deviates from the intended, it may spoil the outcome. Hence, the necessity by all involved for subordination.

Insubordination could inadvertently sabotage a mission. While people generally are free to have their own opinions and to voice them, this is not what a soldier is supposed to do. "In wartime and in many situations in peacetime, you cannot take the time to explain your decision. You must say, briefly and even abruptly: *Go there. Do that. Now carry out my orders.* Any reasonable man in a subordinate position will recognize the pressure of events and unhesitatingly do as he is told."⁴⁸ Undoubtedly, if there is time to explain, though he is under no obligation, the commander may do so, stating his reasons briefly, and then giving the order. But what if a subordinate is aware of circumstances that would prevent the achievement of the military goal and that only through disobeying the orders, will the goal be reached. In that case, disobeying may be justified, because the military goal and completion of the task have priority over the commander's right to have orders obeyed. While this is seldom the case, during battle anything can happen and then there will be always be such a dilemma. Obviously, there is no unambiguous answer to the question of whether disobedience is ever justified. As mentioned examples of military disobedience show, it is extremely difficult to judge those who betrayed the system and people who they were supposed to serve and protect, without clear historical knowledge. Therefore as long as any case of disobedience is not clear, it cannot be fully justified and especially cannot serve as an example of good soldiering.

After World War II, the international Law Commission, instigated by the UN, defined seven principles that govern the acts of individuals in war. One principle is that a person's acting on the orders of his government or a superior does not relieve him of responsibility under international law. As a result, an oppressive question could affect a combat soldier at any moment: "Is, in fact, a

⁴⁸ Janowitz, Professional Soldier, 43.

moral choice open to him in a given situation? Such an approach to military ethics and to the issue of legitimacy leads the way to commitment as a mode of military compliance and a source of combat motivation. Where mere obedience to government or superior does not relieve the combatant from his own responsibility, the only alternative is personal commitment.”⁴⁹

Nevertheless, in most cases, soldiers must assume the greater competence and knowledge of their superiors and obey orders. For the same reason, the wisdom of the overall policy must be accepted as correct and cannot be discussed. While high-ranking officers can and should voice their opinions, especially when they disagree with a political decision about using armed force, they cannot directly oppose the policy and must follow the orders of the civilian leadership, making the best of a bad situation. There have been times, however, looking back at history, that it may have been a heroic act to resist authority within the military. Under Hitler, for example, subordinates' resistance to the abusive and sadistic orders of some of those in power would certainly have been heroic. Some German officers who joined the resistance to Hitler in the late 1930s did violate their oath to follow the orders of the Fuehrer and Reichskanzler who was also the supreme commander of the armed forces. The situation was different during and at the end of the WWII, when in addition to the genocide Hitler had ordered, he gave absurd military orders in an ever increasing spiral of disaster. In such circumstances, disobedience would not only be justified, but also glorified.⁵⁰

4. Integrity

Success in any activity, but particularly in combat, depends on mutual trust and group cohesion. Hence, integrity rates high in the military value system. The soldier in combat is always supported by bonds to his comrades, mutual

⁴⁹ Gal Reuven, “Commitment and Obedience in the Military: An Israeli Case Study,” *Armed Forces and Society* 4 (Summer 1985), 564.

⁵⁰ Janowitz, *Professional Soldier*, 77.

dependence, and trust. Patriotism and the main military purpose are not irrelevant, but his obligation to the nation is more distant and abstract than dedication to his comrades-in-arms.⁵¹ These interpersonal ties are similar to and as strong as – in fact, often stronger than – family ties in civilian life, because once a soldier is in battle, the only family he has and can rely on are his closest fellows, his comrades in arms. This solidarity usually takes precedence over barriers such as social class, race, and religion. The best example and proof for this is the solidarity of the contemporary world against terrorism, or in the past against Nazism. Nothing is more important than integration when one faces misery and adversity.

Although such ties expand spontaneously, their formation comes from sharing the same worries and hopes, from the necessity for teamwork, from their by common experience and loyalty to one another, and from the mutual pride in their unit, and from just being a soldier. At the same time, the bonds between them are constantly being tested by the sudden, unexpected, and unavoidable situations that military units inevitably find themselves in.⁵²

In the late 1970s in Poland there was an organization called Solidarity (registered in November 1980) which was openly opposed to communists, but Col. Kukliński was not a member, he operated alone instead. As a matter of fact, he did not even warn Solidarity about Marshal Law plans, but he informed the CIA instead.

D. MILITARY ETHICS

Soldiers' moral obligation to their nation, military, superiors, comrades, and troops is mandatory for all soldiers regardless of rank. It prevents officers

⁵¹ Michel Martin Luis and Ellen Stern McCrate, *The Military, Militarism, and the Polity* (New York: The Free Press, A Division of Macmillan, 1984), 66.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 118.

from bullying subordinates and both commanders and individual soldiers from endangering their comrades on the battlefield for selfish personal motives.⁵³

Claus von Stauffenberg, Hans Oster, and the others who plotted to assassinate Hitler are now considered heroes, which raises two key questions. Are there any fundamental principles of war that are not affected by the passage of time? Or does everything depend on different points of view that derive from a given context of politics and society at a given time? Is Col. Ryszard Kukliński who spied for the CIA during the Cold War similar to the German officers? Are people who consider him “the first Polish officer in NATO” right or wrong? Only a sense of duty that comes from personal beliefs can answer questions about the legitimacy of a person’s actions.

As long as the military is an organization in which obedience is an important value, there will be conflict at times, however, between ethics and the military’s professional activities. Every commander is aware that discipline and authority are intended to guarantee an immediate execution of a given order. But no member of the armed forces, but especially officers, can be expected to follow orders, especially ethically nebulous orders, without understanding them. That is why commanders must build a supportive and cooperative atmosphere within their units, effectively and promptly handle difficulties among subordinates, educate and teach them, and be able to explain problematic issues and orders. From an ethical point of view, every commander should strive to be just and set an example to be followed. As it was mentioned earlier, it is very important that soldiers trust their commander’s competence and believe in the accuracy of his decisions. Authority alone is not sufficient to assure an order’s execution. Respect and an ethical attitude are also most desirable. Only the recognition of value, honor, and dignity along with moral qualities such as tact and tolerance, self-control and discipline, patience and responsiveness can ensure respect,

⁵³ I. Schober, “Military Acting in the Spirit of Moral Obligations,” 70.

understanding, and sympathy, the essence of contemporary leadership. Respect, acquired by moral qualities, shapes the ground for authority. Authority gained by force or formal position will not be fully reliable.⁵⁴

Because the military profession is the only institutionalized profession that deals with life and death, it must be fully moral and operate according to strict ethical rules. The legitimacy of war and the legitimacy of soldiers' conduct in war comprise the central issue of military ethics. A soldier's perception and interpretation of legitimacy is at times the ultimate test of his honesty, loyalty, and moral integrity.⁵⁵

Theorists distinguish between the rules of *jus ad bellum* and *jus in bello*. The rules of *jus ad bellum* pertain to the circumstances under which states can acceptably wage war, while the rules of *jus in bello* serve as guidelines for fighting fairly once war has begun.⁵⁶

"In regard to the first question, there are conditions that make the use of force legal. The most important criteria are: a) war must be declared by a lawful authority; b) there must be a just cause; c) war must be prosecuted for rightful intention; d) war must be a last resort; e) there must be reasonable hope for success; f) the political objectives must be proportional to the cost of war; g) war must be publicly declared. There are basically two criteria for *just in bello*: a) war must be fought justly; b) discrimination must be observed (in the sense of noncombatant immunity)."⁵⁷

Those conditions cover only the most predictable aspects of a war, since many of the consequences of war are unforeseeable and incalculable. Although authority, cause, and intention, can be used to test the legitimacy of war, it is not that easy and simple. "Each one of these criteria faces serious difficulties, both

⁵⁴ I. Schober, "Military Acting in the Spirit of Moral Obligations," 90.

⁵⁵ Gal Reuven and Thomas C. Wyatt, *Legitimacy and Commitment in the Military* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1990), 4–5.

⁵⁶ Micewski, Sob, and Schober, *Ethics and International Politics*, 7.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 8.

logical and epistemological. Going deeply into ethical question causes more uncertainty than transparency. For example, who decides what is a legitimate authority? Who decides what are just causes? Who decides whether the intentions are right or not? The answers to these questions are always subjective.”⁵⁸

Questions about legitimacy in war face the same difficulties. For example, if a legitimate war is one that does not harm the innocent, then who are the innocent? And, finally, who decides when a soldier can follow his conscience and disobey orders? Were the German officers who opposed Hitler right or wrong? The officers’ professional duty to obey the leaders of the state clashed irreconcilably with the state’s legal and moral responsibilities.

In next chapters, we address such ethical dilemmas and possible answers in more detail.

⁵⁸ Reuven and Wyatt, *Legitimacy and Commitment in the Military*, 6.

III. PRINCIPLES OF DEMOCRATIC CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS

A. CIVILIAN SUPREMACY OVER ARMED FORCES

When faced with a potential war situation, countries naturally look to their military, for that is the purpose for which armed forces are created. In a democratic society, people elect a leader whom they trust will make the appropriate decisions with respect to the nation's security. This leader is expected to demonstrate competent leadership in regard to the issues of war. A democratic military has the job of carrying out decisions made by duly elected leaders, because the military's job overall is to serve the nation and its society. Because the major decisions in a democratic country are made by elected officials, the citizenry's control of the military and other institutions is indirect as befits a republic.⁵⁹ According to a U.S. government document titled "Principles of Democracy: Civil-Military Relations," "there are some basic ideas concerning civil-military relations which are fundamental for democratic society:

- Civilians should take an active role in the decision making process concerning war and peace as well as national security. Ultimately, civilian leaders represent the whole society and are responsible for any military decisions;
- The people of a democratic country decide to have a military component for a reason. This reason is to protect the society. Therefore, the military is not an organization with a political or social bias; its primary mission is to protect the nation and serves to carry out decisions that the people make. The military implements what is decided by the elected civilians
- Active-duty soldiers may vote, just like any other citizen, but this is as far as it can go. Politics needs to stay separate from the armed service; that is why every soldier has to retire if he wishes to become a politician.

⁵⁹ Principles of Democracy: Civil-Military Relations
<http://usinfo.state.gov/products/pubs/principles/civil.htm> (accessed January 6, 2007).

- Civilians, who represent the whole democratic society and make decisions about national security issues, must promote democracy and value freedom. Military subordination exists to carry out orders made by the elected leaders. Because of the inherent separation of military and politics, this leaves civilians with the duty to manage and oversee the military which requires an educated, knowledgeable civilian.”⁶⁰

Civilian control over the military, the elementary principle of civil-military relations, is at the same time one of the fundamentals of democracy. A democratic society relies on its military, and the armed forces, although politically neutral, are inseparable from society.

Samuel E. Finer argues that the military is actually unable to rule the state; that is why civilian control over the armed forces is natural.⁶¹ “Even in those states commonly described as military dictatorships, the ruling body, junta, or cabinet, will be found not to consist exclusively of military men.”⁶² The more sophisticated the country, the more complicated it can become to manage. In a simple economy, it may be relatively easy for the military to control the state. However, it can be quite complicated in a more developed economy. “The more primitive the economy, the easier it is for the armed forces to administer it by purely military men and measures. Modern armies are a microcosm of the state; they possess their own separate and self-contained system of provisioning, supply, engineering, communications, even of education. As societies become more complicated, however, so do the technical skills of the armed forces lag further and further behind them.”⁶³

Thus, in advanced states, society depends on the military in terms of security, but the military needs society in terms of economic advances. It is a

⁶⁰ Principles of Democracy: Civil-Military Relations
<http://usinfo.state.gov/products/pubs/principles/civil.htm> (accessed January 6, 2007).

⁶¹ Samuel E. Finer, *The Man On Horseback* (London: Pall Mall Press, 1962), 5.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 14.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 15.

simple mutual need. What is more, since the army is a microcosm of the state, officers cannot refuse to obey civilian orders and then expect subordinates to follow their orders.

Although Samuel Huntington wrote his book *The Soldier and the State* fifty years ago, it continues to influence scholars around the world. Some of his ideas must be adjusted to allow for new perspectives, but many remain applicable as originally stated. For example, his concept of two major types of civilian control over the military is still valid: there are two major types of civilian control, subjective and objective.⁶⁴

1. Subjective Civilian Control

Subjective civilian control maximizes the civilian power and automatically minimizes the military power relative to civilian control. However, because the civilian population is so large and inherently diverse, it is difficult to maximize civilian power as a whole. So the maximizing of civilian control refers, in effect, to either one civilian group specifically or civilian groups. Usually, one civilian group gains power at the expense of other groups.⁶⁵ Historically, a certain social class will typically gain power through subjective civilian control. Although subjective control ensures efficient civilian power over the military, at the same time, it makes a particular group of people much more powerful than the others, which blurs the distinction between the military and civilians. In other words, subjective control, by promoting a single political party, is a danger in a democracy.

This state of affairs is exactly what happened in Germany before World War II, for example. In 1933, a circle of figures around President Paul von Hindenburg, at pains to break the deadlock in parliament and willing to scrap democracy paved the way for Hitler to be named Chancellor.⁶⁶ The Germans,

⁶⁴ Huntington, 80.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 82.

⁶⁶ Henry Ashby Turner Jr., *Thirty Days: Hitler's Thirty Days to Power* (New York: Basic Books, 1996), 5.

who were dissatisfied with the Treaty of Versailles and the resulting economic depression in their country, needed strong leadership.⁶⁷ Thus Hitler, with his strong belief that Germany could recover its past greatness and his unusual ability to address and influence the masses, was in the right place at the right time. Over a few months in 1933, the National Socialists coordinated the civil and political institutions to create a one-party dictatorship with the aid of soldiers. And eventually, terror, conspiracy, surveillance, and force became the means by which the civilians controlled the armed forces as well as infiltration of the ranks of the military with party members as well as enthusiastic support of Nazi aims.⁶⁸

In general, if one steps back from the German case for an instant, once national militaries became more professional and the role of officers more of a profession, the competition among civilian groups to control the military became more complicated. And civilian groups began to compete with each other over the agenda of military institutions. The professionalization of militaries actually changed the notion of civilian control, and it became much more meaningful than it had been before the rise of the military profession.⁶⁹

2. Objective Civilian Control

Objective civilian control occurs when a military attains the respect and honor associated with professionalism and power is divided between civilian groups and the military. This type of civilian control provides for a more professional military and promotes democracy.⁷⁰ Thus the two types of civilian control, objective and subjective, are exact opposites. Subjective control causes the military to become a microcosm of the larger society in which it exists. Objective control uses the military to serve the society which created the armed

⁶⁷ Peter Fritzsche, *Germans into Nazis* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2003), 158.

⁶⁸ Turner, *Thirty Days*, 150.

⁶⁹ Huntington, 85.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 83.

service for its own protection. It is not surprising, then, that the push for subjective control typically comes from various civilian groups, while the push for objective control comes from the military.⁷¹

Subjective civilian control blurs the boundary between civil and military, undermining the professionalism of soldiers. Objective civilian control, by keeping the military out of politics, helps to promote the professional status. It prevents the military from playing favorites among the various civilian groups. To further promote and maintain the respectability of the profession, therefore, the military must be politically sterile.⁷²

3. Clausewitz and Civil-Military Relations

This chapter's discussion of civilian control and civilian supremacy would be gravely incomplete without some mention of Clausewitz's timeless contribution to civil-military relations via his theory of war at the end of the dynastic age and the rise of the wars of nations. Although his masterpiece, *On War*, refers mainly to politics during wartime, it is also extremely important to the theory of the military in politics in general. Clausewitz defines inseparability between the military and politics and their mutual relationship. "This unity lies in the concept that war is only a branch of political activity; that it is in no sense autonomous. It is, of course, well-known that the only source of war is politics – the intercourse of governments and peoples; but it is apt to be assumed that war suspends that intercourse and replaces it by the wholly different condition, ruled by no law but its own. We maintain, on the contrary that war is simply a continuation of political intercourse, with the addition of other means."⁷³ By saying this, he clearly determines that the political or the deeds of policy dominate military considerations.

⁷¹ Huntington, 85.

⁷² Ibid., 84.

⁷³ Carl Von Clausewitz, *On War*, ed. and trans., Michel Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), 605.

Nevertheless, the question of the proper level of political control over military operations, which is crucially important, has no easy answer. The conventional theory of civil-military relations, which originated with Sun Tzu in the fourth century BC and is still noted today, says that wartime decisions may be political in the beginning, but the course of war should be in the hands of military professionals.⁷⁴ Such an idea is also echoed in the strategic precepts of Helmuth von Moltke. There are as many historical examples that support this theory as there are those in conflict with it.

In the book *Supreme Command*, for example, Eliot Cohen argues that politicians should not stay out of the military during war, because when politicians are not managing the military, a major disaster may result. This was once summarized nicely by French Premier Georges Clemenceau: “War is too important to be left to generals.”⁷⁵

Cohen explains that war is not only something that needs to be managed politically, but also that it needs to be political in all aspects, including all the components of war management. Those generally include aspects such as gaining and managing allies, isolating rivals, and utilizing resources. According to Cohen, it is the people’s job to determine what in war society can accept or decline when military professionals have varying opinions about how certain situations should be handled. Cohen points out that it is important for politicians to manage war and to become involved in it, regardless of the outcome.⁷⁶ However, currently, his ideas contradict a significant percentage of American opinion concerning U.S. involvement in the war in Iraq. “A more relevant assessment is that peace is too vital to be left to pundits and members of Congress – people who have overwhelmingly dismissed the option of swiftly

⁷⁴ Sun Tzu, *The Art Of War*, ed. and trans., Samuel B. Griffith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1963), 81.

⁷⁵ Eliot A. Cohen, *Supreme Command* (New York: Anchor Books, 2002), 54.

⁷⁶ Cohen, 247.

withdrawing U.S. troops from Iraq.”⁷⁷ Although there is no doubt that war and politics are inseparable and that the military must be controlled by civilians, there is no answer to the question as to how deeply politicians should be involved in an armed conflict.

Nevertheless, the examples of the Nazis’ regime in Germany and Martial Law in Poland show clearly what happens when the military intervenes in politics. That is why, today it must be clear, that the military should stay out of politics, and that it is not a military’s role to decide about national politics.

B. MILITARY EFFECTIVENESS

The government’s job is to ensure a strong political, economic, and ethical structure for maintaining national security. The military has the responsibility to decide which strategies, methods of implementation, and specific tactics will enable a desirable outcome with the least amount of loss.⁷⁸ If the civilian leadership formulates goals that the military perceives as impossible to achieve, it can put a lot of stress on the military and cause friction between the military and civil authorities. That is why the civilian authorities should do everything in their power to strengthen military effectiveness, not decrease it.

Military effectiveness is important in all nations. To reach maximum effectiveness, a military must have a sufficient strength force to complete any required task, but, at the same time, it must be sufficiently subordinate to do only what is required. In a democracy, there should be equilibrium between the civilian leadership and military effectiveness. At some level, the civilians must manage the issues involving the use of power and force and the rivalry between democracy and expertise. In most countries, the government has the

⁷⁷ Norman Solomon, “Peace Too Important to Be Left to Pols and Pundits,” *Antiwar* (November 22, 2005), <http://www.antiwar.com/solomon/?articleid=8109> (accessed December 14, 2006).

⁷⁸ Douglas Porch, “Strategy Formulation and National Defense: Peace, War, and the Past as Prologue,” in *Who Guards the Guardians and How: Democratic Civil-Military Relations*, ed. Thomas C. Bruneau and Scot D. Tollefson (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2006), 105.

responsibility to deal with issues whose outcome will determine the effectiveness of the armed forces. Most national militaries have the potential to become increasingly more effective without compromising their civilian control. Civilian control is necessary for military effectiveness especially in terms of any mission that attempts to achieve political ends by using military means. In general, this is becoming an increasingly difficult task as the roles and missions of national militaries become increasingly varied and more numerous.⁷⁹ Thus the various institutions – ministries of defense, legislatures, intelligence agencies, military budget offices, recruitment systems, and military educational facilities – that determine civil-military relations must work diligently to maintain the military's effectiveness and to keep full control over the armed forces.⁸⁰

In most countries, the legislative institutions have an integral role in controlling the country's military. In democratic states, those institutions, which are fundamental to a democratic society, are usually made up of elected representatives and play a key role in controlling military policy, oversight, and budgets. Thus, democracies have to balance their legislative and executive branches of government in the formation of policies. Indeed, most such legislatures participate not only in civilian control of the military, but also in the development of defense policy.⁸¹

There is wide-spread agreement that the legislature's role in matters of defense in a democracy helps to ensure not only accountability, but also the transparency of the policies formed. And the accountability component is strengthened even more if representatives of both the legislative and the executive branch are involved in the policymaking. The society in general is also better served when there is input from all segments, not just the executive

⁷⁹ Suzanne C. Nielsen, "Civil-Military Relations Theory and Military Effectiveness," *Public Administration and Management* 10:2 (2002).

⁸⁰ Thomas C. Bruneau, and Scott D. Tollefson, ed., *Who Guards the Guardians and How: Democratic Civil-Military Relations* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2006), 6.

⁸¹ Jeanne Kinney Giraldo, "Legislatures and National Defence: Global Comparisons," in *Who Guards the Guardians and How*, 34.

branch. Defense issue debates conducted by the legislature help to educate the public, and the resulting policies will likely be more well rounded and longer lasting than policies simply dictated by the executive branch. The oversight that the legislature provides helps to ensure that policies and laws are also properly implemented and reveals possible policy flaws that must be remedied. The fact that the legislative branch is publicly involved reduces the chance that the military will fail to comply with its regulatory responsibilities.⁸²

The more power the legislature has in overseeing the defense sector, the stronger the opportunity for civilian control. Because countries structure their legislatures according to their own various and unique needs, there is still much to be learned about legislative institutions' involvement in military affairs.⁸³ But one thing is certain: a good relationship between civilians and the military is crucial to national security. A ministry of defense (MOD) is a government institution that helps ensure quality cooperation between the civilian and military leadership. Successful democratic civil-military relations require a strong, influential defense ministry or department that truly deserves to be called the "guardian of the guardians."⁸⁴

A ministry of defense serves many significant purposes, which generally include: structuring a balance-of-power relationship between the elected officials and the military; stating and giving responsibility to both civilian and military officers; maximizing the effectiveness of the military; ensuring the maximal use of resources such as funds, equipment, and soldiers.⁸⁵ When civilians control the military, one problem that may occur is an attempt to control improperly the intelligence services. Democracy requires the transparency that is fundamental to democratic governance. Nevertheless, intelligence services often need the

⁸² Giraldo, "Legislatures and National Defence," 35.

⁸³ Ibid., 36.

⁸⁴ Thomas C. Bruneau, and Richard B. Goetze, "Ministries of Defense and Democratic Control," in: *Who Guards the Guardians and How*, 71.

⁸⁵ Bruneau and Goetze, 94.

exact opposite to operate effectively.⁸⁶ By nature, military intelligence services need to be secretive, which compromises some of their accountability and transparency. Civilians must be able to work inside the military intelligence community to balance the power a specific military branch may have. Although it may create tension between the civilians and the military, this is one of the major ways that a democracy can be strengthened democracy and maintain its civilian supremacy.⁸⁷

Another aspect that affects a military's effectiveness is the defense budget. The amount of money that a country allocates for its defense budget will determine the amount and nature of the resources also allocated. Many countries have a relatively weak way of managing their finances, and, in some cases, civilians have no involvement in or responsibility for providing for national security. In other countries, the civilian elites have included defense spending as part of their overall campaigns for fiscal reform. Yet, in some states the defense budget is determined not by need, but by the money that is available. In these cases, national security is sidelined so that the government can focus on other fiscal criteria. It is only after the budget is finalized that the military is able to decide how to spend the few funds allotted it. Thus, the defense experts are given no opportunity to contribute to the decision-making process concerning the monies needed for national security, and there is a break-down in the civil-military relations. This is why there is a strong need for military advice and civilian professionals who recognize the need for military input in regard to the budget.⁸⁸

The way that civilians join or are drafted into the military varies from country to country. Recruitment may include several different systems, all which affect civil-military relations in the long-term. The system of recruitment also influences the way the society perceives the military. Thus the recruitment

⁸⁶ Mark M. Lowenthal, *Intelligence from Secrets to Policy* (Washington DC: CQ Press, 2006), 208.

⁸⁷ Thomas C. Bruneau, and Kenneth R. Dombroski, "Reforming Intelligence: The Challenge of Control in New Democracies," in *Who Guards the Guardians and How*, 169.

⁸⁸ Giraldo, 178.

process is vital to civil-military relations because it has an immediate impact on the connection between the individual citizen and the national defense system. The practice of having a national armed force is almost universal. However, the way they are created differs from country to country and changes over time in keeping with a country's social, political, and economic changes.⁸⁹

Ultimately, each nation has to decide which type of recruitment process is best for its unique situation. Many countries in Europe and the United States have a history of compulsory military service. Military systems in many western- and eastern-European countries are still based on conscription. Compulsory military service versus an all-volunteer system has been the focus of debate worldwide. Since the era of mass armies went out with the Cold War, countries were forced to reevaluate how they will systematize recruitment. Democracies need to be aware of public scrutiny in regards to this issue. The end results of any recruitment decisions will require both political and military leaders to work together to ensure acceptance by society.⁹⁰

Education has, undoubtedly, crucial impact on the professional character of the military and its effectiveness. The most fundamental values such as responsibility, loyalty, and, foremost, obedience to political authority are forged in military minds through the wide field of education. The best way to educate soldiers, particularly officers is to show them the good examples of officers' behavior and also examples which clearly indicate improper conduct. The examples of anti-Nazi conspirators are undoubtedly clear illustrations of when disobedience to military orders and political decision might be excused. Nevertheless, even with such a clear example, what must be stressed is always an exception, rather than rule. For the same reason, Col Kukliński's case cannot

⁸⁹ Edwin Micewski, "Conscription or the All-Volunteer Force: Recruitment in a Democratic Society," in *Who Guards the Guardians and How*, 209.

⁹⁰ Micewski, 231.

serve as an illustration of when disloyalty can be excused. It is, as it was already mentioned, still too nebulous, and it could only raise more questions and doubts about military obedience and loyalty.

Wars can be won in the classrooms, long before the armed forces are involved in conflict. Civilians placed in the same classrooms as military officers help to keep military scholars cooperative with liberal democracies without compromising military effectiveness.⁹¹

Due to the fact that democratic military education's fundamentals include a loyalty to civil society and respect for civilian leadership, it helps democracy and society as a whole. Military officers need to have an appreciation of the institution of democracy. In this dynamic world, the competitive edge is through education. A long term investment in the minds of the military pays off in the long run.⁹²

The most fundamental issue of civil-military relations, civilian supremacy over the armed forces, depends then on many factors as discussed above. To ensure full control and keep military effectiveness, all of them have to be engaged. Moreover, officers must understand and fully accept civilian supremacy, but civilians need to respect and always consider military experience and expertise when there is a country's defense decision to be made.

C. CURRENT PROBLEMS WITH DEMOCRATIC CIVILIAN SUPREMACY OVER ARMED FORCES

Although such countries as the U.S.A. and the United Kingdom have one of the longest histories with democracy and democratic control over the armed forces, they face new problems concerning control over the military. One issue which significantly undermines democratic control and democracy itself is related to the increasing number of private military firms operating around the globe.

⁹¹ Karen Guttieri, "Professional Military Education in Democracies," in *Who Guards The Guardians And How*, ed. Thomas C. Bruneau and Scot D. Tollefson (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2006), 235.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 255.

Although this problem is not directly related to the topic of this thesis, it is critical to understand the importance of the civilian supremacy over the military and its meaningful role in democracy.

For the last two centuries, the privatization process has touched everything but the military. As such, the military profession has been distinguished from all other jobs. "Society has a direct, continuing, and general interest in the employment of this skill for the enhancement of its own military security. While all professions are to some extent regulated by the state, the military profession is monopolized by the state."⁹³ Some problems with civilian control over the military are expressed by the increase in the privatization of security provisions. "More generally, the argument perhaps finds expression in the suggestion that, in present circumstances, states have a monopoly on the ability to legitimize violence, but they do not have the ability to monopolize violence."⁹⁴

Hiring private firms to provide military training is not new whatsoever. In the 1950s and 1960s, British military companies operated in the Middle East and Africa, and U.S. companies trained Vietnamese forces. After the Cold War, however, the number of firms offering military services has increased; the scale of their operations has developed immensely.⁹⁵

Although private military firms (PMFs) have begun their activities with logistical support and military training, now they also provide clear combat support or sometimes conduct battles. On the one hand, PMF's can be and are very useful. On the other hand, values such as loyalty, accountability, legitimacy and, foremost, oversight and control are endangered. PMFs can bypass democracy by handing foreign policy tasks over to companies which are not held

⁹³ Samuel P. Huntington, *The Soldier And The State* (London: Harvard University Press, 1957), 53.

⁹⁴ Ian Clerk, "The Security State," in *The Global Transformations Reader*, ed. David Held and Anthony McGrew (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2003), 183.

⁹⁵ Deborah Avant, "Mercenaries," *Foreign Policy in Focus*, no. 5, June 15, 2000.

accountable. These PMFs may offer another way that an executive body can go about a secret operation while leaving out other military branches entirely. There is almost no authority over PMFs. Any operations conducted by these PMFs can therefore be kept secret from the public. Payments to PMFs can be made by funds coming from anywhere. Because of the lack of the clear paper trail, there may be poor legislative oversight which may adversely affect the balance of power, one of the very things democracy is based on. The use of PMFs may change the way that the military is viewed by the citizens of any democratic country. The military formally rely on upon membership and support and has not been viewed as a company working for its own monetary profit.⁹⁶

As far as principles of civil-military relations are concerned, particularly democratic control over the military, governments are meant to be accountable to the people. Current PMFs are overstepping their boundaries by taking over what has traditionally been the responsibility of the government, the UN or regional alliances. Soldiers in most national armies take oaths of allegiance to some entity representing national sovereignty. Private corporations are concerned with profit to themselves and also to their shareholders, not with allegiance to the government. There is a general lack of accountability inherent in hiring these PMFs. They actually have the potential to work for anyone, not just legal governments. This is why it can be very short sighted to use them. One cannot predict who will hire them in the future, they may even work for the enemy if the price is right. A potential client of these private corporations could include terrorists or other hostile groups.⁹⁷

In a military, there is always the risk of some sort of disloyalty, but it is nowhere nearly as high as the risk when using PMFs. Angry or disgruntled PMFs could actually retaliate against clients in many ways. If the client does not pay, or if there is an unwanted termination of contract there may be some severe

⁹⁶ P.W. Singer, *Corporate Warriors: the rise of the privatized military industry* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2003), 214.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 220.

repercussions. Soldiers who work for money only will always be tempted when more money is involved. “Equally important is the fact that their motivation for fighting is economic gain; this ‘cash’ nexus is what distinguish a mercenary from a volunteer soldier.”⁹⁸

Except for the problems with legitimacy, control, oversight, loyalty, responsibility and accountability, private military firms can have a potential negative influence on the status of the local military and thus a potential disruption to civil military relations. “When private firms are contracted for military roles, usually at the decision of the civil government, it is often taken as a proof of the failure of the local military to carry out its own responsibilities properly.”⁹⁹

As long as there is a strong demand for private militaries, these firms will exist, but without any measure of regulation especially, when in a PMFs’ market there is a potential for corruption. One would need to analyze potential losses to see the overall outcome on society of using PMFs. Undoubtedly, there is a strong need to create new rules and regulations. Otherwise the democratization process which is being spread around the world will endanger its own principles.¹⁰⁰ The following considers this body of theory levied against the actual experience of soldiers and politics in the most extreme circumstances of the age of total and cold war.

⁹⁸ Anthony Mockler, *The New Mercenaries* (London: Sidgewick and Jackson, 1969), xiii.

⁹⁹ David Stephen, *Defending Third World Regimes from Coups d’Etat* (New York: University Press of America, 1985), 87.

¹⁰⁰ P.W. Singer, *Corporate Warriors: the rise of the privatized military industry*, (New York: Cornel University Press, 2003), 228.

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IV. HEROISM, BETRAYAL AND SOLDIERLY EXAMPLE IN CONTEMPORARY CENTRAL EUROPEAN CIVIL MILITARY HISTORY

The soldier and politics considered herein underwent its perhaps greatest process of trial in the wake of the First World War. On June 28, 1919, after six months of negotiations, the peace treaty which officially ended World War I, was signed by the victors and vanquished. The Treaty of Versailles, named after the Palace of Versailles where the conference took place, was decisively opposed by the German people. Many Germans found themselves betrayed by their own government, which was believed to have approved conditions without a fight.¹⁰¹ To make matters worse, Germany, after World War I, was in a great financial disaster of inflation, and according to Versailles, had to pay huge reparations to the allies. In addition, the representatives of the fledgling Weimar Republic were not allowed to take part in the peace talks. As a result of all these misfortunes, many Germans saw the revolution in Russia and communism as a solution to their problems. Riots, demonstration and strikes were organized by communists and constituted a real danger to the young democracy in Germany.¹⁰² In September 1919, a demobilized soldier, Adolf Hitler joined a small nationalist party called the *Deutsche Arbeiterpartei*. It had only a few members and no clear objectives, but its members nourished great hatred of the government. Relatively soon, Hitler with his unquestionable ability to address crowds, became the leader of the party and renamed it to *Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei* – NSDAP (National Socialist German Workers' Party). The name Nazi stands for the first two letters taken from *National* and the third and fourth letters *Sozialistische*.¹⁰³

¹⁰¹ Peter Fritzsche, *Germans into Nazis* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2003), 85-95.

¹⁰² Susan Ottaway, *Hitler's Traitors* (London: Pen and Sword, 2004), 14.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 15.

In January 1923, due to Germany's inability to pay reparations, France occupied Germany's most important industrial region – the Ruhr. This caused a significant rise in inflation, which severely damaged the country, but at the same time, enabled Hitler and NSDAP to get more supporters. After an unsuccessful attempt to seize power in the late 1923, Hitler learned his lesson, and figured out that he could only do so legally. Help came again with the great depression in 1929, when the German people, unhappy with poverty, unemployment and desperately looking for someone to improve their situation, turned to Hitler and the NSDAP. During the elections in July 1932, the NSDAP won 230 seats in the parliament, and became the largest party in Germany.¹⁰⁴ Although the President of Germany, Paul von Hindenburg, was not fond of Hitler, describing him as an "Austrian corporal," he appointed Hitler Chancellor in 1933. Purportedly, Hindenburg was influenced by his son Oskar to make Hitler Chancellor because he was afraid that Oskar would divulge that von Hindenburg had registered his property in East Prussia in the name of his son, to avoid paying taxes.

On January 30, 1933, after the radio broadcast of Hitler's appointment, thousands of Berliners shouted and sang "Heils" and "Hochs" and "Deutschland uber Alles," cheered Hitler and Hindenburg. Of course, not every German supported the Nazis, but their opponents had already been stopped and for the next fifteen years the Nazis never lost power.¹⁰⁵ One has to admit that Hitler, with his ideology and prejudices, mirrored, in some way, the thoughts of those of his time.¹⁰⁶

It was clear for Hitler that Hindenburg, who was already eighty six, would not live long. He died on August 2, 1934 and the last faint remnant of German democracy died with him. The same day Hitler announced his new oath of loyalty for the military:

¹⁰⁴ Ottaway, 23.

¹⁰⁵ Fritzsche, 140.

¹⁰⁶ Anton Gill, *An Honourable Defeat: A History Of German Resistance To Hitler, 1933-1945* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1994), 110.

I swear by Almighty God this sacred oath:

I will render unconditional obedience to the Führer of the German Reich and people, Adolf Hitler, Supreme Commander of the Wehrmacht, and, as a brave soldier, I will be ready to stake my life for this oath at any time.¹⁰⁷

After Hindenburg's death, Adolf Hitler adopted the title, *Führer* and *Reichskanzler*, to demonstrate dominance over any of his predecessors. He officially claimed that Hindenburg's title *Reichspräsident* should die with its previous owner. Hitler, strongly supported by Oskar von Hindenburg achieved his goal and became the ruler of the Reich. On August 18, Hindenburg's son announced, in a radio broadcast, that "my father saw in Adolf Hitler his direct successor as head of the German state, and I am acting in accordance with my father's wishes when I call upon all German men and women to vote for the transfer of my father's office to the Führer and Chancellor."¹⁰⁸

When Hitler came to power, he was commonly accepted by professional soldiers. The moment of disabuse came for many loyal officers with the Night of Long Knives, the massacre of hundreds of SA (the storm-troopers, paramilitary organization of the NSDAP that had assisted the Nazis rise to power in the twenties) leaders, Hitler's purported rivals, on June 30, 1934.¹⁰⁹

One of Hitler's earliest opponents was Hans Oster, a military officer who had served with distinction in World War I. After the SA massacre, Oster changed from skepticism about the regime into strong resistance.

A. HANS OSTER

Hans Oster was born in Dresden in 1887. He was a career officer who valued military order, obedience and loyalty. He served bravely during World War

¹⁰⁷ Ottaway, 44.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Terry Parssinen, *The Oster Conspiracy of 1938: The Unknown Story of the Military Plot to Kill Hitler and Avert World War II* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2003), 6.

I where he earned the Iron Cross First and Second Class and the Knight's Cross with Swords. He stayed in the army after the war, and like most other professional soldiers, he was not fond of the Treaty of Versailles and Weimar Republic, though he served it loyally. He also obediently accepted Hitler when he came to power.¹¹⁰

Oster was dismissed from active service at the beginning of 1933, when his affair with a senior officer's wife was discovered. In October 1933, he was offered a job in the Abwehr, intelligence agency, that enabled him to stay in close contact with the secret state police – the Gestapo. At that time, his suspicions about the Nazi ideology significantly increased, but he remained loyal to the regime. The turning point in his ideas came with the massacre of hundreds of SA leaders on June 30, 1934. Oster joined the resistance and also involved his wife due to her English skills so she could translate BBC broadcasts. It was also he who, in late 1938, recruited Ludwig Beck who was Chief of Staff of the German armed forces and was extremely valuable for the resistance group. The Chief of the Abwehr, Admiral Canaris, who was already involved also had tried to influence Beck, but did not succeed. Oster and Beck were passionate horse riders and Oster used that fact as an excuse for several excursions where they could talk undisturbed. Nevertheless, Beck's sense of loyalty and dedication to Germany did not let him join the opposition before he retired from army service in 1938.¹¹¹ There were more people who worked loyally for the Reich and simultaneously were opposed to it, like the great general Guderian who did not support the Nazis whatsoever, but served loyally during World War II.¹¹²

After Austria was annexed by the Reich in March 1938, Hitler's popularity significantly increased. The victory, without any fight and no German troops killed, caused opponents to decrease. The society would have not understood a

¹¹⁰ Gill, 40.

¹¹¹ Ibid., 41.

¹¹² Kenneth Macksey, *From Triumph to Disaster: The Fatal Flaws of German Generalship, from Moltke to Guderian* (London: Greenhill, 1996), 246.

coup against a leader who had done so much for Germany in such a short time. The Sudetenland of Czechoslovakia, with 3.5 million German-speaking inhabitants, was Hitler's next military target. Although the majority of people of Sudetenland were Czech and Slovak, Hitler claimed that all Germans should live inside the Reich, so he intended to annex this whole region. When Hans Oster and the other conspirators learned of Hitler's plans, they began preparations for a coup. The plan was based on the assumption that France and Britain, as Czechoslovakia's allies, would declare war. The resistance group informed British and French officials about Hitler's plans, but were completely ignored. Also, many German army officers thought that an attack on Czechoslovakia could bring on war, and tried to dissuade Hitler from carrying out the plan. Hitler's response to that warning was clear and firm. "I'm not asking my generals to understand my orders, but to obey them!"¹¹³

Under the auspices of Hans Oster, plans for the coup were already prepared in detail which was to isolate the Reich Chancellery, with the support of a few armed officers, and then enter the building and capture Hitler. Among the resistance group there were two ideas about what to do with Hitler. Due to the unpredictability of the public's reaction, some conspirators wanted the dictator to be publicly judged for his crimes; the others, like Oster, wanted him to be immediately killed. "As long as Hitler was alive, he argued, there would be a risk of forces loyal to him mobilizing to rescue him. He was a popular figure and it would be better to demonstrate to the nation what crimes he had in fact committed - but this should take place only after he was dead."¹¹⁴ As a matter of fact, Oster gave a secret order to one of the members of the assault group to "accidentally" kill Hitler. The army was supposed to take control of the country in order to prevent anarchy. However, this required the involvement of the Commander-in-Chief of the army, Walter von Brauchitsch, who was not trusted, although he personally was opposed to Nazism. That is why the conspirators

¹¹³ Gill, 91.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 96.

were to involve him at the very last moment. The new Chief of Staff of the armed forces, Franz Halder, was not involved but was fully trusted by his predecessor Ludwig Beck, who had a high opinion of him. Erwin von Witzleben, Commander in Chief of the Army, and one of the conspirators, was responsible for the isolation of Berlin during the coup.¹¹⁵

Meanwhile, the negotiations between Britain, France and the Reich over Czechoslovakia were in process. The declaration of war by Czechoslovakia's allies was vital for justification of the coup. One has to keep in mind that regardless of Hitler's previous military successes, German society was generally against a war, and the coup would have been presented as the only way to avoid armed conflict.¹¹⁶

Although Czechoslovakia was backed up by the military treaties with France and Russia, international relations between the key countries were in favor of Hitler. Russia was to help only if France upheld its treaty obligations, and France was too weak militarily and politically to act without British support. British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain admired Hitler in 1937 and in 1938 tried to keep peace at all cost. Except of the mobilization of the British Fleet and ultimatum issued to Germany, Chamberlain did not do much to save Czechoslovakia and continued his policy of appeasement. To make matters worse, in 1937, the U.S. passed the Neutrality Act. Above all, it was just twenty years after the Great War and terrible memories were still fresh.¹¹⁷

As a result of international indifference, during the Munich conference in September 1938, the peaceful cession of Sudetenland was granted, and the resistance plan for a coup failed. What is more, Hitler raised the stakes and except for military occupation, made a demand for evacuation of all Czechs from the inhabited territory. Although mobilization of the British Fleet and fourteen

¹¹⁵ Parssinen, 79-136.

¹¹⁶ Matthew Cooper, *The German Army 1933-1945* (London: Macdonald and Jane's, 1978), 168.

¹¹⁷ Gill, 100.

French divisions made Hitler hesitate, it did not stop him from execution of his plans. On October 10, 1938 Czechoslovakia lost Sudetenland and its mountain defenses. The coup failed and the resistance significantly weakened just hours before fulfillment. Hitler was more victorious than ever before and deepened his beliefs in his infallibility. His next target was Poland and the extermination of the Jews.¹¹⁸

The failure of the 1938 conspiracy did not bring an end to the resistance, and Oster remained an active opponent to Nazism. However, his plans to destroy Hitler's regime and save Germany had never been as close to fulfillment as in 1938. Unfortunately, Germany was much better prepared for war than before, and the enthusiasm of the high ranking commanders for a coup decreased. Nevertheless, Oster tried to prevent total war until the invasion of Poland and never gave up during the war. The next plan to overthrow the Nazis occurred just after the defeat of the Poles. The key person in this new plot was general Hoepner – commander of a panzer army with Headquarters in Dusseldorf. "The plan was to keep two armored divisions of Hoepfner Gruppe in the vicinity of Berlin to use them to surround the Reich Chancellery on the day of issuance of orders for the Western Offensive, and to occupy strategic positions... in the rest of Germany."¹¹⁹ Nonetheless, due to the unwillingness of the majority of high commanding officers to carry out the next plot, some of Oster's group conspirators decided to kill the Führer even with small support. Erich Kordt, a German diplomat who warned Britain about secret negotiations between Germany and Russia, decided to assassinate Hitler by himself. "All I need is a bomb, he told Oster. You will have the bomb by November 11, was the reply."¹²⁰ Kordt, as a member of Ribbentrop's entourage visited Hitler often enough to be trusted by personal guards, could easily bring and detonate the bomb close to

¹¹⁸ Gill, 102.

¹¹⁹ Personal History of Erich Kordt, German Diplomat, Deutsch Papers, 11, quoted in Terry Perssinen, *The Oster Conspiracy of 1938: The Unknown Story of the Military Plot to Kill Hitler and Avert World War II* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 2003), 177.

¹²⁰ Perssinen, 177.

the Führer. Despite Oster's best effort, he could not obtain the necessary explosives. Also, security around Hitler strengthened, and the assassination plans failed once again.¹²¹

Until the first serious German defeat at Stalingrad, where Oster's son was killed in action, the conspirators did not have the opportunity to assassinate Hitler and seize power in the Reich. Another appropriate time came when fortunes of war turned against Hitler in February 1943. Oster and his friend from the Abwehr, Hans von Dohnanyi, planned to kill Hitler with the help of some officers of the Army Group Centre, at that time deep inside Russia. They planned to blow up the plane with the Führer aboard, flying from the Russian front to his headquarters in East Prussia. Once it had happened, Oster accompanied by others was to seize control of Berlin. It is quite important to mention that after Poland's defeat, the conspirators received assurance of help from Chamberlain, which was overdue, but still could be useful after the coup.¹²² Although, a bomb was successfully placed in the plane, it did not explode, probably because of low temperatures. In spite of the fact that an attack failed again, conspirators decided to fight against the Nazis to the bitter end. The same month, another assassination attempt organized by Oster's group, failed when the fuhrer changed his plan to visit a military exhibit in Berlin and avoided the planned execution by a suicide bomber.¹²³

Hans Oster not only desperately tried to kill Hitler but also helped some Jews to escape in the beginning of 1943 to neutral Switzerland. He and Dohnanyi managed to deliver the funds and fake documents to fourteen Jews. Dohnanyi was arrested by the Gestapo, after financial the related fraud was discovered, and imprisoned in the Sachsenhausen concentration camp. Oster, was experienced enough to cover evidence but was captured when trying to hide and destroy proof of Dohnanyi's illegal funds transfer. Oster was dismissed from

¹²¹ Ottaway, 102.

¹²² David Dutton, Neville Chamberlain (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 54.

¹²³ Gill, 178.

the Abwehr, which was entirely dissolved in February 1944, and put under house arrest. He, therefore, was unable to be involved in the July 20 plot to assassinate Hitler.¹²⁴

After that unsuccessful attempt to kill Hitler, when a bomb placed by Claus von Stauffenberg only slightly wounded the Führer, the Gestapo launched a massive pursuit for all resisters. “Oster and between 160 to 180 other officers were arrested, tried, convicted, and hanged. In consequence, the war in Europe continued until May 8, 1945, hundreds of thousands were killed on each side during the last ten months of World War II, and Germany was devastated and occupied.”¹²⁵

After the war, Oster’s daughter recalled her father: “My father was fully aware of what he was doing, his decisions were based on logic and ultimately on human considerations. Few people were in a better position to alter the course of events, and my father was a man of action. Once he had decided on a course of action he would stay on it. The risk of drawing the odium of treachery upon himself didn’t seem too high a price to pay.”¹²⁶

B. COL. CLAUD VON STAUFFENBERG

Colonel Claus Schenk von Stauffenberg joined the resistance relatively late, but he gave a new, tremendous spur to further conspiracy developments. He was born in 1907 to an old Swabian Roman Catholic aristocratic family. He had two, three-year older twin brothers, Alexander and Berthold. The latter, who became a lawyer and served in the Navy during the war, was also involved in the resistance. Alexander, a historian, was never fully trusted by his brothers and was the only one who survived the war. Claus during his early years saw the rise of the Weimar Republic, which, as for many other German people, had no

¹²⁴ Gill, 180.

¹²⁵ Ulrich F. Zwygart, *How Much Obedience Does an Officer Need?* (Kansas: Combat Studies Institute, 1992), 5.

¹²⁶ Gill, 40.

attraction to him. Similarly to Oster, he had a great talent for music and drawing. His decision on a military career was a surprise for his family, not only because of his health problems, but because his natural talent and his own consideration of architecture as his further career. Stauffenberg married Nina von Lerchenfeld three years before he joined the military. The couple had five children, the youngest Konstanze was born after her father's death. In 1926, Stauffenberg began his military career in the 17th Cavalry regiment stationed in Bamberg, Bavaria, Germany. In 1927, he was promoted to cadet sergeant and one year later went to the Hanover Cavalry School. After returning to Bamberg he was promoted to second lieutenant in 1930, and six years later attended General Staff training in Berlin.¹²⁷ One year later, Stauffenberg wrote a prize-winning essay on defense against paratroopers and also an analysis of tank warfare. In 1938, he, as Staff Officer joined the 1st Light Division commanded by General Erich Hoepner, who later was involved in Oster's conspiracy and coup attempt.

In October, the same year, Stauffenberg took part in the Sudetenland annexation, but did not know that his Division was supposed to participate in the planned coup. In September 1939, Captain Stauffenberg with the 1st light division occupied Poland and by that time he was proud of Germany's victories. Although doubts had just begun coming to his mind, he served proudly and bravely on the Russian front in 1941. During this time, after he saw the atrocities perpetrated by the SS on the east front, and witnessed how Hitler limited supplies and reinforcements to the army, his reluctance to the Nazis increased. By the middle of 1942, he became convinced of the necessity to assassinate Hitler.¹²⁸

At the beginning of 1943, after being promoted to Lieutenant-Colonel, Stauffenberg volunteered for the North African front and was sent to Tunisia as 1st Staff Officer in a panzer division. He did not serve in Africa long, because he was badly wounded when under a British fighter attack. "He lost his right hand

¹²⁷ Peter Hoffman, *Stauffenberg: A Family History, 1905-1944* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 48-85.

¹²⁸ Gill, 231.

and two fingers on his left hand. He was also blinded in his left eye and had wounds to his ears and knees.”¹²⁹ Although severely injured, after six months, Stauffenberg returned to active duty. Regardless of his previous military achievements and loyal service, motivated by his sense of honor, Stauffenberg decided to join the resistance. In October 1943, he became Chief of Staff in the General Army Office commanded by Friedrich Olbricht. Hitler by that time, stubbornly and mindlessly, was throwing his last reserves into the fight. Stauffenberg immediately, together with other conspirators, including his brother Berthold, began planning to kill Hitler. In the light of Hitler’s absurd military orders, assassination was actually in harmony with his own book *Mein Kampf*. “Hitler had also written that to save a state from destruction, members of that state had every right to rid it of destructive leaders.”¹³⁰

There were three officers who volunteered to murder the dictator: Captain Axel Freiherr von dem Bussche, Ewald Heinrich von Kleist, and Eberhard von Breitenburch. Unfortunately, none of them succeeded. Bussche and Kleist, who came from the same regiment, were ordered to rejoin it few days before planned assassination. Breitenbuch, at the very last moment, was kept by SS guards from attending the meeting with Hitler, where he was to shoot the dictator.¹³¹

On July, 1 1944, Stauffenberg was appointed as a Chief of Staff to General Fromm, head of the Reserve Army, which gave him direct access to Hitler. An operation plan for a coup, named “Valkyrie,” was supposed to activate the Reserve Army in Paris, Prague and Vienna and the conspirators to take control over the country in the name of national interest after Hitler had been killed. Operation “Valkyrie” which was originally created in case of a coup against the Nazi government was actually approved by Hitler. The dictator, in 1942, was convinced by General Olbricht, one of the conspirators, of the necessity of such a

¹²⁹ Susan Ottaway, *Hitler’s Traitors* (London: Pen and Sword, 2004), 152.

¹³⁰ Gill, 233.

¹³¹ Peter Hoffman, *The History of German Resistance 1933-1945*, trans., Richard Berry (London: Macdonald and Janes, 1977), 137.

plan and gave an order to formulate it.¹³² The plan which, originally, was supposed to help Hitler and the Nazis in a case of a coup, was to be used by conspirators to take over power in the Reich. After the Führer's successful assassination, the SS were to be blamed for the coup. Military and civil key persons in Berlin and others in main cities were selected and instructed about the coup. Radio broadcasts were already prepared and typed. The only conspirator who had relatively easy access to Hitler was Stauffenberg, so it became clear that he would have to assassinate the dictator and also lead the coup in Berlin. Time was running out because the Russians were on their way to Germany and the Allies were preparing for the invasion in France. It was already clear that Germany had lost the war. Nevertheless, Henning von Tresckow, general staff officer in the high command of the Army Group Centre, who recruited Stauffenberg (but at the time of coup was at the front), was fully convinced about the coup and advised Stauffenberg. "The assassination must take place. Even if it does not succeed, the Berlin action must go forward. The point now is not whether the coup has any practical purpose, but to prove to the world and before history that German Resistance is ready to stake its all. Compared to this, everything else is a side issue."¹³³

The part of the plan was also to kill the Minister of the Interior, Heinrich Himmler, so that he could not assume control. In the meantime, the head of the Abwehr, Admiral Wilhelm Canaris, was dismissed and the entire Abwehr was taken under the control of Himmler. Conspirators had to speed up the execution of the plan because they knew that soon, all secret plans, and also evidence of Hitler's committed atrocities which were kept in Canaris' safe box, would be discovered. Stauffenberg decided to kill Hitler by detonating a bomb hidden in a briefcase. The first attempt took place on July 11, when Stauffenberg as a new commander of the Reserve Army, was called to Hitler's headquarters in Bavaria. However, it did not succeed because Himmler was not present during the briefing

¹³² Ottaway, 152.

¹³³ Gill, 238.

with the dictator and the assassination had to be postponed. On July 15, the attempt failed again when the conference with Hitler was finished earlier than it was planned. However, Operation Valkyrie had already been issued and the army stationed in Berlin was ready for the coup. When the operation was cancelled, conspirators managed to convince Wilhelm Keitel chief of the OKW (Armed Forces High Command) that the decision about the operation was made only to initiate a full rehearsal in case of real coup. The conspirators became very nervous about the situation because it was necessary to complete the task before allies defeated Germany, so there would be still a chance to negotiate the end of the war.¹³⁴

By that time, the group of officers who realized of denseness of continuation of the war increased. Field Marshal Erwin Rommel, leader of the legendary Africa Korps, joined the conspirators and said of Hitler: "I know that man. He will neither resign nor kill himself. He will fight, without the last regard for the German people, until there isn't a house left standing in Germany...I believe it is my duty to come to the rescue of Germany."¹³⁵ Although, there were some speculations about the real motives Rommel was driven by, he did not contribute to the resistance at all because he had been heavily wounded in an allied attack on his car.

The next chance to eliminate Hitler came on July 20, when Stauffenberg was called to attend a conference at the Wolf's Lair, Hitler's headquarters in East Prussia. The orders concerning the plot had already been prepared to be issued once Hitler was dead. General Fritz Fellgiebel, conspirator and Chief of Signals of the OKW, was prepared to shut off the communication system in the Wolf's Lair to prevent those loyal to Hitler from contacting the outside world. The Governor of occupied France, General Heinrich von Stulpnagel, was ready to arrest all Gestapo and SS officers.¹³⁶

¹³⁴ Ottaway, 154.

¹³⁵ Ibid., 155.

¹³⁶ Ibid., 157.

The plot was ready to be executed, and Stauffenberg knew that from that point, success depended only upon him. In the early morning of July 20, he flew to the dictator's headquarters and just before 12:30 entered the conference room with a bomb hidden in a briefcase. Once the bomb was activated, Stauffenberg did not have much time because the fuse was set for ten minutes. Inside the conference room, after being introduced, the assassin put the suitcase under the Hitler's table and left unnoticed. Once he heard the explosion, it was clear for him that Hitler was dead. Stauffenberg flew back to Berlin and, as a chief of the whole plot, began Operation Valkyrie. He did not know that Hitler was accidentally saved by Colonel Heinz Brandt who had moved the briefcase away from dictator to have closer access to the Führer. Brandt did not survive, but Hitler was only slightly injured. Again, as a consequence of almost unbelievable coincidence, the dictator stayed alive. Nevertheless, the operation was already in process, communication with the Wolf's Lair was cut off, and 1200 Gestapo and SS officers in Paris were arrested. Unfortunately, communication was restored after three hours and Hitler immediately informed his propaganda minister, Joseph Goebbels of what had happened. At 6:30 pm the same day, the German radio announced to whole Europe that there had been unsuccessful attempt to kill the fuhrer. Six hours later, Hitler personally announced to Germany that he was alive. "My German Comrades, If I speak to you it is first in order that you should hear my voice and should know that I am unhurt and well, and, secondly, that you should know of a crime unparalleled in German history... The bomb which was planted by Colonel von Stauffenberg, exploded two meters to the right of me..., but I am completely unhurt... I interpreted this as confirmation that Providence wishes me to continue my life's mission as I have in the past."¹³⁷

¹³⁷ Ottaway, 161.

Claus Philipp Maria Schenk Graf von Stauffenberg was sentenced to death for treason and executed by firing squad. Some other conspirators were given ability to shoot themselves or to take poison. Many others, following Hitler's order, were hanged with wire attached to meat hooks. "I want them to be hanged, hung up like carcasses of meat."¹³⁸

As a direct result of the July 20 plot, almost five thousand people were executed, and the resistance never recovered. Hitler stayed in power until May, 9 1945, and another thousand people died.

Although right after the war, the Oster and Stauffenberg cases were not clear enough to categorize them, today both men are recognized as the bravest men in German history, whose loyalty and highest devotion to their country is undisputable.

C. COL. RYSZARD KUKLIŃSKI

The rise of communist armies in Europe in the wake of the Second World War, amid the fifty years of the Cold War, included cases when officers, feeling the need to be relieved of the oath they had taken, regarded it as their duty to act against their commanders and the regime they currently served in favor of what time has suggested was a greater national cause.

Col. Ryszard Kukliński, director of the operational-planning directorate of the Polish general staff in 1970s, who died in Florida on February 10, 2004, had one of the most dangerous and successful intelligence careers of the Cold War.¹³⁹

Kukliński was born on July 13, 1930 in Warsaw. Influenced by war and the patriotic conduct of Polish soldiers, he became an officer, and in 1951 began service in a mechanized regiment. His anger and hatred for the system he served appeared for the first time in 1956. He was deeply shocked by the

¹³⁸ Ottaway, 163.

¹³⁹ Radek Sikorski, "Pride of Poland," National Review, Vol. 56, April 19, 2004.

violently crushed, Polish uprising, when some seventy five workers died, and also, by the Soviet suppression of the Hungarian uprising the same year. Right after the industrial unrest, high ranking Russians, among them Marshal Konstanty Rokossowski, were forced to leave Poland. That allowed Kukliński believe in the prospect of change.

In 1963, Kukliński was graduated from General Staff Academy and appointed to a position in General Staff Headquarter in Warsaw where he worked on military exercises concerning strategic operations.¹⁴⁰ Over the next nine years he prepared and took part in handling of the main strategic Polish and Warsaw Pact exercises that enabled him to have wide access to secret information. The Warsaw Pact strategy was offensive and assumed an attack on West Germany, Holland, Belgium, and Denmark. By that time, Kukliński's intellectual friend was General Chocha, deputy chief of staff for operations and later Chief of General Staff, who, like himself, thought that Poland should not have an offensive strategy but be focused on self - defense. "Why was it an offensive strategy? Why were Polish troops attacking NATO? Shouldn't they only defend Poland?"¹⁴¹

In 1967, Kukliński was sent to Vietnam as a member of the International Control Commission, where he was believed to make contact with the CIA for the first time. As a matter of fact, there were many American troops and among them one with Polish roots. Although Kukliński spoke to him once, and tried to see him again, he never was able to do so.¹⁴²

After returning from Vietnam, his doubts and suspicious about real Soviet intentions increased significantly due to the Warsaw Pact intervention in Czechoslovakia to put down an uprising. On August 20, 1968, Polish troops along with Russian, Hungarian, Eastern German and Bulgarian troops crossed

¹⁴⁰ Benjamin Weiser, *A Secret Life* (New York: Public Affairs, 2004), 44.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 46.

¹⁴² Krzysztof Dubinski i Iwona Jurczenko, *Oko Pentagonu* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Intryga, 1995), 14.

Czechoslovakia's border and, in cooperation with the Czech president, suppressed the revolution.¹⁴³ After forty years, Czechs still remember Polish intervention. It will probably take a long time for full forgiveness.

Another event which convinced Kukliński of the necessity to contact the Americans occurred in December 1970, when Polish troops were ordered to open fire at shipyard workers protesting food's rising prices. Forty seven protesters were shot to death, and about a thousand were hospitalized.¹⁴⁴ Kukliński had to wait until August 1972, for a convenient time to contact the Americans, when he was authorized to lead a surveillance sailing trip along the western European coast up to Belgium. Once all the crew, consisting of eight officers and his son Bogdan, were harbored in West Germany, Kukliński managed to send a letter to the American military attaché in which he asked for the meeting. After a short phone conversation with the U.S. Embassy in the Hague on August, 17, in the late evening of the same day, Kukliński met two CIA agents.¹⁴⁵

For the next nine years, he delivered to the CIA over forty thousand pages of "secret plans of Soviet exercises for the invasion of Western Europe, the location of Soviet wartime command bunkers, plans for the imposition of martial law in Poland, and the details of numerous weapons. He gave successive U.S. administrations direct insight into the planning of Warsaw Pact militaries and his information became the standard by which other intelligence from behind the Iron Curtain was judged."¹⁴⁶

Kukliński with his wife and two sons had to escape from Poland after it was found out that there was a leak in the Polish General Staff. Soon after, U.S.

¹⁴³ Kieran Williams, *The Prague Spring and Its Aftermath: Czechoslovak Politics, 1968-1970* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 26.

¹⁴⁴ Jarosław Kurski, "Grudzień 1970. Wydarzenia w Gdansk i Gdyni," *Gazeta.pl Wiadomosci*, February 15, 2001, <http://wiadomosci.gazeta.pl/wiadomosci/1,55670,138425.html> (accessed March 1, 2007).

¹⁴⁵ Weiser, 55.

¹⁴⁶ Radek Sikorski, "Pride of Poland," *National Review*, Vol. 56, April 19, 2004.

President Ronald Reagan, at the beginning of 1981, ordered reports about Kukliński to be sent to the Vatican, it was discovered that there was a CIA agent on the Polish General Staff.¹⁴⁷ Kukliński believed that there was an East German secret police (Stasi) agent operating in the Vatican, who became aware of his cooperation with U.S. intelligence. On November 7, 1981 the CIA transported Kukliński and his family to America. Three years later, Col. Ryszard Kukliński was sentenced to death, in absentia, by a communist court in Poland; but, after the fall of communism it was changed to 25 years imprisonment and as a result of pressure from the U.S. concerning Polish membership in NATO, the sentence was annulled. Kukliński stayed with family in the U.S. until his death in 2004, but it was not a nice time for him whatsoever. In 1994 his younger son Bogdan disappeared while sailing in Florida and was never found. His other son, Waldemar, was hit by a car by an unknown man and died. It is believed, although there is no evidence, that it could have been the Soviet secret service's revenge for his treason.¹⁴⁸

In 1998, after seventeen years in America, Kukliński visited democratic Poland, where even today, he has as many opponents as supporters. After he died his ashes were transported to Poland and rest in a cemetery in Warsaw.¹⁴⁹

Supporters claim that unquestionably Col. Ryszard Kukliński is a national hero and should be considered as the first Polish officer in NATO. They had already awarded him honorable citizenship of Krakow, one of the main cities in Poland, and want to promote him posthumously to General. People who strongly support him base their opinion on one general statement, that Kukliński, by working for the Americans, had indeed fought against communism and served the best national interest of Poland, endangering his family and his own life, and

¹⁴⁷ "Col Ryszard Kukliński was the Polish army officer," <http://www.kuklinski.us/page4.htm> accessed March 3, 2007).

¹⁴⁸ Krzysztof Dubinski, 153.

¹⁴⁹ Ewa Berberyusz, "Kartki ze skazonej strefy," *Przegląd Polski*, July 9, 2004, <http://www.dziennik.com/www/dziennik/kult/archiwum/07-12-04/pp-07-09-02.html> (accessed February 11, 2007).

only this one fact, is enough to consider him as a hero. In other words, his anticommunism is regarded as a determinant of his patriotism. He is often compared to Nazi conspirators like Stauffenberg or Oster who betrayed their state to try to save their country. Kukliński's case was quite an important issue when Poland requested NATO membership. As a matter of fact, Kukliński was pardoned only two years before Poland joined NATO and seven years after communism collapsed. For obvious reasons, Kukliński is considered a hero, especially in America, and his case was even raised in the U.S. Senate in 1997, when Mr. Roth said, "Mr. President, I rise today to acknowledge the work of an unsung hero, a man whose unparalleled sense of duty to a free and democratic Poland contributed immeasurably not only to that country's freedom from Soviet domination but also to the security of the United States. I refer to Col. Ryszard Kukliński."¹⁵⁰

However, in Poland, Kukliński does not have as many supporters as in the U.S. and, as public surveys indicate Polish society is still divided regarding this issue. Among 47% citizens who are interested in this matter, 27% claim that his deeds were treason, 21% consider Kukliński as a patriot.¹⁵¹

Opponents argue that he simply betrayed Poland, not Russia, because he was sending the CIA mainly Polish military secrets which, in the case of nuclear war, would have been used against all Warsaw Pact members. Moreover, based on today's knowledge, there was not a real nuclear threat, at least not in the 1970s. He also did not inform the anticommunism social movement Solidarity about plans for marshal law and purported Soviet intervention. Furthermore, he always acted on his own and never represented any other group of opponents. Kukliński was upset, especially by the fact that even key opposition members and Solidarity veterans did not show much understanding of his feat. Lech

¹⁵⁰ U.S. Senate, "Col. Ryszard Kukliński," September 25, 1997, <http://www.videofact.com/mark/Kuklinski/senat.html> (accessed January 4, 2007).

¹⁵¹ Osrodek Badania Opinii Publicznej, "Sprawa pułkownika Ryszarda Kuklińskiego w opinii Polaków," November 19, 1996, <http://www.tns-global.pl/archive-report/id/641> (accessed January 7, 2007).

Walesa, Solidarity founder and Polish President, did not recognize him as a patriot at the beginning of his presidency in 1990. Also, Adam Michnik, the left-wing dissident and very active opposition member, did not see Kukliński as patriot. "It should not be forgotten, that Kukliński was in the army in March 1968 during the anti-Semitism campaign and the brutal suppression of the opposition student movement; that he was in the army during the invasion of Czechoslovakia; and that he did not publicly condemn those actions, leave the army, leave the party, and somehow join the opposition."¹⁵²

¹⁵² Stefan Auer, *Liberal Nationalism in Central Europe* (New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2004), 92.

V. CONCLUSION

Today's armed forces are entrenched in a very complex society where the diversity of tasks the soldiers may have to accomplish will cause many questions concerning the correctness of the received orders and their moral legitimacy.¹⁵³ Nevertheless, due to the fact that obedience is the highest military value, without which armed forces cannot exist, one should avoid such potential dilemmas for military professionals. That is why, based on the principles of military professionalism, the fundamentals of civil-military relations, particularly civilian supremacy over the armed forces, and historical facts, there is only one and clear conclusion to be drawn. All mentioned cases when soldiers thought it was their moral, professional and patriotic duty to act against political decisions and the orders of their civilian leaders, are rather an exception and should never serve as an example to be followed. Furthermore, many people compare Kukliński to German conspirators during World War II, but these examples were similar only to a certain extent. From a military professionalism perspective, Oster, Stauffenberg, and Kukliński betrayed their political leaders so they all are traitors. The difference is that German resistance to the Nazis is today crystal clear for the whole world and the fact that they were fighting against evil is unquestionable. What is more, by doing so, they did not weaken their country's defense system but had tried to stop the war before it even occurred and then speed its end to enable Germany to take part in negotiations.

However, after the July 20 plot, Stauffenberg, Oster and many others were not recognized as patriots, even by foreign societies. On August 1, 1944, *the New York Herald Tribune* reported: "If Hitlerism has begun its last stand by destroying the militarist tradition it has been doing a large part of the Allies' work for them."¹⁵⁴ On August 9, the same newspaper continued the article to argue

¹⁵³ Ulrich F. Zwygart, *How much Obedience Does an Officer Need?* (Kansas: Combat Studies Institute, 1992), 35.

¹⁵⁴ Gill, 261.

that attempt to kill Hitler was “more reminiscent of the atmosphere of a gangster’s lurid underworld than of what one would normally expect within an officers’ corps and a civilized state.”¹⁵⁵ A few days after the plot, an academics and diplomat, English historian of German and diplomatic history, John Wheeler-Bennett wrote: “It may now be said with some definiteness that we are better off with things as they are today than if the plot of 20th July had succeeded and Hitler been assassinated... The Gestapo and the SS have done us an appreciable service in removing a selection of those who would undoubtedly have posed as ‘good’ Germans after the war... It is to our advantage therefore that the purge should continue, since the killing of Germans by Germans will save us from future embarrassments of many kinds.”¹⁵⁶

Today, streets in Germany are named after Hitler’s failed assassins, Wheeler-Bennett’s negative attitude towards German conspirators is considered inexcusable, and there is world wide understanding of those deeds. Although they undoubtedly violated all principles of military professionalism, and committed treason, the unambiguous history of Hitlerism and knowledge about the Nazis’ crimes, has allowed society to fully understand and glorify what they did.

As a matter of fact, in the early 1950s, West Germany was asked to become the shield of western Europe against Communism and people who were involved in the July 20 Plot were among the most serious candidates for the new West German armed forces – Federal Defense Force - Bundeswehr. The commission, called the selection board, consisted of both former military and civilians and was established to carefully select personnel for the future German armed forces. The officers of Bundeswehr were to be politically neutral and also they had to fit the new democratic system. One of the members of the selection board, Fritz Erler, told parliament in 1954 that “the future force would not become the army of single political party or coalition; rather, it would assure that the future

¹⁵⁵ Gill, 261.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

personnel would be chosen not merely for their technical expertise but also according to their qualities of character as well as their unconditional reliability and loyalty to the democratic system.”¹⁵⁷ Obviously, many former Wehrmacht officers as well as officers from all other branches volunteered to join Bundeswehr. The Acceptance Organization (PGA) had to carefully consider every application in order to avoid drafting former Nazis and others who had committed war crimes. The future officers were to be educated in a spirit of partnership and their military tradition was to be based mainly on the July 20 plot. The tradition dilemma was not solved whatsoever. The July 20 plot was a very hard psychological and moral problem and it was almost impossible to base both tradition and draft on only this event. Moreover, the main attempt to kill Hitler in July 1944, was not fully recognized in 1950s by German society as an act of patriotism and the highest devotion for the country. The founders of the Bundeswehr understood earlier than German society the moral and political aspect of conspirators and respected them as much as those who fought bravely and loyally at the front. Nevertheless, the July conspiracy against Hitler remained the main issue in judging candidates for new armed forces. The members of the selection board asked the future officers of their attitude to conspirators. The answers were supposed to help the commission decide who of the applicants was ready to serve in Bundeswehr.¹⁵⁸

In the summer of 1955, the first soldiers were drafted and the process of building Bundeswehr begun. Although tradition of new armed forces was mainly based on anti-Nazi resistance and the Prussian reformers from the beginning of the 19th century, the German military history was neither glorified nor condemned

¹⁵⁷ Deutscher Bundestag, Stenographische Berichte, February 26, 1954, quoted in Donald Abenheim, *Reforging The Iron Cross* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), 138.

¹⁵⁸ Donald Abenheim, *Reforging The Iron Cross* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), 145.

totally. The common soldiers of the Wehrmacht were also honorable because they fought with honor, loyalty, and great self-sacrifice. Since 1955, Bundeswehr has also grown its own tradition.¹⁵⁹

Selective approach to the history, especially the recent German military history, caused the Waffen-SS veterans public dissatisfaction. In response, the ministry spokesman explained that the Bundeswehr was not against the individual, not involved in crimes of Waffen-SS veterans, but against individuals who empathized with Nazis ideology.¹⁶⁰

Although, the Bundeswehr tradition was selected carefully, the problem with an adoption of the right German military history remained during the whole Cold War not fully solved. The end of The Cold War did not bring any solution whatsoever, and the issue of the military heritage became even more complicated. Except of the experience of the Third Reich, the united Germany had to face the deep heritage of the fifty years of communism in the German Democratic Republic.

The unification of Germany in 1990 brought the end of the second leading army of the Warsaw Pact; eastern German armed forces; the Nationale Volksarmee (NVA). For almost half a century, Bundeswehr was seen as an imperialistic enemy under the NATO compass and Nazi war flag, and its soldier was identified as a brutal, underhanded, and bloodthirsty foe.¹⁶¹ On the other hand, NVA was recognized as a strong Warsaw Pact ally and the great opponent to the democratic western Europe. After disbanding the NVA, the problem with its former soldiers and communist heritage was similar to the issue of former Wehrmacht soldiers after the war. During one night, the soldiers of former NVA became the citizens of the Federal Republic and the soldiers of Bundeswehr. However, only a small portion of these troops could continue their career in

¹⁵⁹ Donald Abenheim, *Soldier and Politics Transformed: German-American Reflections on Civil-Military Relations in a New Strategic Environment* (Berlin: Carola Hartmann Miles, 2006), 89.

¹⁶⁰ Donald Abenheim, *Reforging the Iron Cross*, 213.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 24.

Bundeswehr. As it had already happened before, there were a vast number of dissatisfied soldiers and officers who either had to retire or, due to the lack of non commission officers (NCO) corps in NVA command structures, serve with the lower rank. Although the service in former NVA was not condemned by the government of Federal Republic, the issues of patriotism, obedience, and loyalty were blurred again, especially in the eyes of the eastern German officers'.¹⁶²

The main difficulties concerning the unification laid in the differences between western and eastern soldierly mentalities and self-images. As one of the main figures of military unification General Jorg Schonbohm wrote in 1992, "the central problem after the takeover by the Bundeswehr of the NVA has been to promote a change in consciousness and establish the ideals of the citizen in uniform."¹⁶³ Almost four decades of the Cold War caused this clash about German military ideas. Nevertheless, there was one major common trait between the Bundeswehr and NVA. Both armies separated their customs, practices, and tradition from the rules of command, morale, and obedience in the Wehrmacht in National Socialism, the Reichswehr, and complicated pre-1918 German armies.¹⁶⁴

Due to the great afford from both sides, the integration process went relatively smoothly and appeared as an unexpected victory for the ideals of command and obedience in the new unified German armed forces.¹⁶⁵ Some officers were retired and received the life-long pension; the others were reeducated and stayed in the Bundeswehr. In several cases the ranks of former NVA officers had to be reduced by one to two grades, very seldom by three grades. Even, those who had to carry on as NCOs were satisfied due to the

¹⁶² Donald Abenheim, *Soldier and Politics Transformed*, 15.

¹⁶³ Jorg Schonbohm, "Deutsche kommen zu Deutschen," quoted in Donald Abenheim, *Soldier and Politics Transformed*, 21.

¹⁶⁴ Donald Abenheim, *Soldier and Politics Transformed*, 21.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 37.

status, pay, respect, and high authority.¹⁶⁶ The unification proved for the second time in German military history that military values such as obedience, loyalty, responsibility are unconditional and those who served proudly and loyally on either political side deserve the highest respect. “The career veterans of the NVA who carried on soldiers of the new Bundeswehr demonstrated an exemplary loyalty and expertise in the challenges of demobilization and reconstruction associated with the military in unification.”¹⁶⁷

From the dawn of history, all armed forces have used the examples of patriotic acts, victorious battles, and famous commanders to educate future officers, and to instill a sense of duty, and significance of military obedience in their minds. Polish armed forces also had problems with adoption of the proper heritage; the last fifty years were especially difficult in selecting the right tradition. The case of Col. Kukliński only complicated the perception and understanding of the Polish military tradition, and, different from German understanding of anti-Nazi conspirators, it only blurred the meaning of obedience, loyalty, and patriotism.

Military tradition has always been a significant element in shaping patriotism and strengthening cohesion of military units. Unfortunately, due to the fact that military is a tool of politics, tradition has always been shaped and carefully chosen to serve political purposes. That is why Polish armed forces had been inheriting different tradition during the time of political indoctrination between 1945-1989, than it inherits now. During the Cold War Polish armed forces, called at that time People’s Polish Army (LWP) was based only on specific tradition, which was selected carefully by the communists, and the historical facts were shaped to serve better the political purposes. During that time, the significance of the mutual Russian-Polish fight against Nazis was emphasized. At the same time, the historical facts like Russian intervention in

¹⁶⁶ Donald Abenheim, *Soldier and Politics Transformed*, 33.

¹⁶⁷ Von Scheven, “Aufbau Ost,” *Informationen zur Sicherheitspolitik*, October 3, 1995, cited in Donald Abenheim, *Soldier and Politics Transformed*, 38.

September 17, 1939 or Polish-Russian war in 1920, and 123 years of Poland under the occupation where Russia was always one of the major occupants were forgotten.¹⁶⁸ Russian communists were aware of importance of proper tradition, and its role in strengthening the Polish-Russian friendship. Therefore, right after WWII, the political body called Main Political-Educational Board of the People's Polish Army was established. Its main task was political propaganda and education of Polish soldiers, especially officers in a spirit of belief in the rightness of Russian friendship. Between 1945-1989 Poland was not a fully sovereign state and was politically and economically dependent on the Soviet Union. Nevertheless, the Polish military was popularly held to be the keeper of the Polish nation even at the lowest points of Warsaw's communist regime.¹⁶⁹

The end of the Cold War and the change of political system in Poland in 1989 have begun the process of returning to forgotten national tradition and to the one thousand year old history of Poland. Immediately after the collapse of communism, the People's Republic of Poland was renamed the Republic of Poland, and the military oath was revised so the Polish soldiers did not have to pledge the loyalty to Soviet Union and other members of the Warsaw Pact. The white eagle of the Polish crest, the symbol of Poland as a republic and independent country, regained its crown.¹⁷⁰

The new military education system rejected political indoctrination, and adopted democratic ideology where the armed forces stay out of a politics, and professional soldiers must not be members of any political party. Democratic politicians claimed that the army as a tool of a state is supposed to serve loyally any political system, and as long as military officers had not committed any crimes, they were still trustworthy. As a matter of fact all military officers who served loyally during the communist time not only were allowed to stay in the

¹⁶⁸ Robert Tkaczyk, *Odzyskiwanie Tradycji w Wojsku Polskim po 1945 Roku*, Thesis, Akademia Bydgoska, 2001, 26.

¹⁶⁹ Donald Abenheim, *Soldier and Politics Transformed*, 27.

¹⁷⁰ Daniel Radziwillowicz, "Przywracanie pulkom tradycji," *Wojsko i Wychowanie*, no. 2 (1991), 9.

new democratic armed forces but also the lustration process did not apply to any of them. Probably, that was the reason why Col. Kukliński's sentence of 25 years imprisoned was not changed till 1995 when political purposes provided him a pardon. Poland was applying for the membership in NATO, and the Polish colonel who was spying for the CIA, and at the same time informing NATO about the Warsaw Pact secret plans, simply could not be sentenced by the applicant to join this military organization. That political move was understood by the military, and although Col. Kukliński was not respected by most officers of that time, they did not object. Military officers knew that such an acquittal was necessary for Poland on its way to NATO. Nevertheless, when the extreme right-wing supporters wanted Col. Kukliński to become a national hero and two Polish cities, Krakow and Gdansk, awarded him an honorable citizenship, that brought up a wide discussion in Poland.

Today, Poland is a member of NATO and European Union (EU); Col. Kukliński's case is no longer an issue. He will probably remain forever a hero for some Poles and a traitor for the others, and nothing will change that attitude. However, as this thesis emphasized, military obedience, honor, and loyalty are the most important military values and only clear cases when it was necessary to have violated them can excuse such a behavior. German conspirators against Nazis are fully recognized today and nobody in Germany questions their deeds. Poland also has many great unquestionable heroes like Marshal Jozef Pilsudski, Gen. Jozef Haller or Gen. Wladyslaw Sikorski, but Col. Kukliński case is still too unclear to allow him to belong to the elite of national heroes, and serve as an example to be followed by the future Polish officers.

Although Col. Kukliński's case is not that easy to judge, it is similar, but only to a certain extent, to that of Stauffenberg and Oster. Kukliński betrayed the system he was supposed to serve, so he committed treason and automatically is a traitor. First and foremost, not many Polish citizens, contrary to the Germans' recognition of World War II conspirators, recognize him as a hero. Only 21% of citizens are convinced about his patriotism and the others, either do not have any

opinion or consider his act as treason. Secondly, also in deep contrast to Hitler's traitors' case, the history of communism in Poland, particularly marshal law and its legitimacy, is still not clear. Although, there have already been many attempts to know if there really was a Russian intervention threat, and if marshal law was an indispensable means of preventing Soviet involvement, a clear answer does not exist. What is more, Poland today is a democratic country, where civilian control over the armed forces and political wisdom must be respected by all military personnel, and there cannot be any doubts concerning obedience.

Forty years ago, Poland, as a Warsaw Pact member, sent its troops to Czechoslovakia to suppress revolution. That was actually the turning point for Kukliński. Today, Poland, as a NATO member and close American ally sends its troops to Iraq and Afghanistan although the majority of Polish citizens argue that it is wrong.¹⁷¹ Supposedly, among these people who are against Polish involvement in the Middle East, there are some military officers. They, considering themselves as patriots, who cannot inactively watch how Polish soldiers are dying hundreds miles from home, could turn in many different ways, against a "wrong" political decision. The army, then, would become useless and would endanger the principles of both military professionalism and democracy.

That is why, as long as the Kukliński case is not as clear as the Stauffenberg and Oster examples, it cannot be considered as heroism. He was pardoned for a clear political reason, because "war is simply a continuation of political intercourse, with the addition of other means,"¹⁷² and the military must serve political goals.

Regardless of Kukliński's intention, every soldier's responsibility, as it is stated in the second and third chapters, is directed toward his comrades and his society and not toward anything else. Although Kukliński might have thought that

¹⁷¹ Osrodek Badania Opinii Publicznej, „Polacy wobec toczacej sie wojny w Iraku,” January 9, 2006, <http://www.tns-global.pl/archive-report/id/1403> (accessed March 3, 2007).

¹⁷² Carl Von Clausewitz, *On War*, ed., and trans., Michel Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), 605.

by spying, he would serve his country best, he could not be sure about it. The good Colonel violated all principles of military professionalism and, which should rather be the subject of a further thesis in ethics and moral philosophy, presumably all principles of humanistic ethics. In the end, treason can never be justified and is certainly, morally speaking, one of the worst, if not the worst crime.

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